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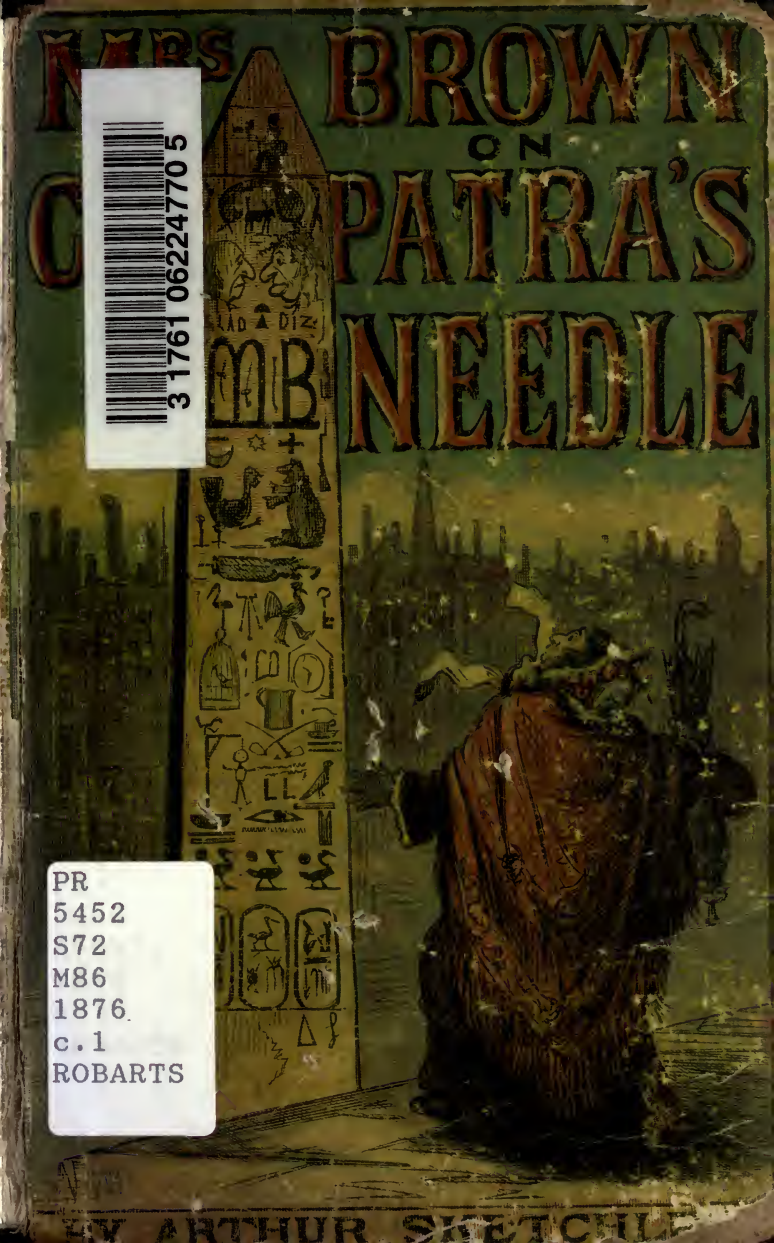

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MRS. BROWN ON CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

PREFACE.

Well, I says, it's all werry fine a-goin' to war over these 'ere Turkeys and Muscovy ducks, as is the names as the Rooshuns did used to go by, but where's the money to come from, as is wot Queen Wictorier were no doubt a-remarkin' to Dizzy over lunchin'—tho', in course, she called 'im my Lord, thro' a-knowin' manners, tho' he was in 'is own 'ouse, as weren't never not one to make free with nobody, tho' no doubt she do often 'ave a good larf in 'er royal sleeves over parties as wants to be lords, and nites, and barrownites, as ain't nobodies arter all; and, as Brown were a-sayin', for my part if I'd 'ave been Dizzy no title shouldn't never 'ave turned my 'ead. I'd 'ave stuck to my colours to the last, as the sayin' is, like Lord Nelson at the battle of the Nile, a-takin' a sight at them French with 'is tellerscope to 'is blind eye; as proves it's

true there's none so blind as them as won't see, as the sayin' is, as is often put on like Mrs. Challin's deafness. And should say as a nice temper Queen Wictorier will be in if there ain't no war, after bein' worreted as she 'ave been over it; as all she asks is to be left alone in 'er 'Ighland 'ome.

But, law bless me, them Rooshuns won't never let nobody be quiet nowheres, not but wot they'd better look out and not rouse the British Lion, as the sayin' is, for tho' they 'ave took 'im down from Northumberland 'Ouse, where he'd been ever since William the Conkeror put 'im up there, arter burnin' down London, and perished in the flames; yet, tho' stowed away, he'll come out as fresh as ever when required, and show 'is strength with all 'is might and main; and no doubt them big guns as they've been a-makin' will give the Rooshuns a-warmin', as is just pre'aps wot they wants with that everlastin' frost and snow all over the place, as were one too many for old Bonyparty, and reg'lar froze 'im up; but then, in course, it sarved 'im rite, 'cos wot call had he to go to Roosher, a-robbin' and a plunderin' as he did, and them French to be proud on 'im.

But it will go 'ard with them Turkeys any'ow when we comes to talk with 'em after their goin's on, not but as to them Rooshun 'trocerties, I think it's six of one and 'arf-a-dozin of the other. In course, it

were a chance for that there people's Willyim, as he did used to be called, for to 'ave a shy at Dizzy, as ain't sich a weazel as to be cort asleep, and no doubt 'ave 'is weather eye up, like when he took and bested everybody in buyin' up that Sewers Canal, as 'ave made the French that savidge, thro' 'avin' meant to swaller it up themselves, as they could bite their own ears off for spite. Not as they can want to go to war, arter the taste as Old Beastmark 'ave give 'em of wot war really means. Not as ever sespects this 'ere republic to last long when once this Exhibition is over, cos it ain't likely. In course the French wouldn't never let themselves down to be only like the Merrykins, as is a reg'lar common lot, and no lords nor ladies among 'em, so, in course, don't want no kings nor queens; not but wot they'll get some one as will punch their 'eads some day, and serve 'em like the railway strikes, as ain't fit to 'ave no power, as they shows in bullyin' of them Injuns, likewise the poor Negro blacks down in the South, as I've see myself as certainly is a dirty set of beasts, no doubt; but, law, if any one is born black it don't come nat'ral as they should take any pride in the keepin' of themselves clean, so don't never wash their 'ands nor yet take to water, but iles theirselves all over like the helefant in a state of natur, for fear as their skin should take and crack; certingly a helefant always smells

werry faint, tho' wonderful instinck, not as that ain't no reason as them Merrykins should take and massacree them niggers, 'cos they don't want 'em no more now as they can grow their cotton without 'em, and is wuss than cruelty to hannimals, and if somebody would get up meetin's to pitch into 'em as 'ave been doin' of it, that would be somethink like showin' a sperrit, and not put our tails atween our legs, and sneak away like we did when them Merrykins took and carried off them Finnyians under our werry noses, as did ought to 'ave been fired on by them wessels, stars and stripes and all. Cos if we don't want to keep them Finnyians, let 'em go, and a good riddance of bad rubbish, as the sayin' is; but don't let's, be insulted by a set of Yankee Doodle rebels, as, in course, wasn't no better than Finnyians theirselves when fust they started in their republican line of business, and, no doubt, if that General Washinton 'ad been cort they'd 'ave took and 'ung 'im for breakin' of 'is hoath to King George, as he'd swore to obey, as ain't hactin' 'onerable in a sojer, tho' he were only in the militier, as in course can't be espected to act like the reg'lar troops, tho' they are called out like the wolunteers in case of war breakin' out all over the place; not as we need be afear'd as long as we've got our gallant Jack tars, and the Dook of Edinburrer for to lead 'em; as Queen Wictorier would put

'erself at the 'ead on in 'er royal yott, as would be all safe enuf, and a fine sight 'er a keepin' ahead of the fleet, and would be sure to run a-mucker at every other wessel as come in 'er way; thro' bein' Queen of the oshun and a rulin' Brittanier, as is the true metal, and never, never will be slaves, as is wot them Rooshuns and Prooshuns knows werry well; thro' 'avin' seed 'ow we served the French out at Waterloo, as will fight and will conker agin and agin.

But, law bless me, 'ow different things are turned out, to wot were espected a little time ago, when the Turks was a-givin them Rooshuns toko all over the place, and every one said as Turkey didn't want no pity, nor 'elp either. So now we've 'ad to step in and say to Roosher, look 'ere, fun is fun, and you've 'ad your little caper over them Balkins, and 'ave took Plevner, and we've stood by a-lookin' on, and not a-offerin' for to 'old the shirts neither side, but now it's aperient to Queen Wictorier as she must interfere, so she 'ave told Bakinsfield to open 'is mouth, in 'er name in course, and say, "Tho' you are my son's father-in-law, and no doubt it's all werry fine as far as you've went, but you ain't a-goin' to 'ave Constantinople," as is a lovely spot, tho' beastly dirty with them Turks and Greeks all over the place, as lives 'appy together, leastways pretty well, cos there always was quarrels among

naybours, and always will be, for all the Peace Society a-ollerin', and I'm sure I'd as lief live next door to Turks, both sides, as 'ave old Sinful livin' one side, 'as is a man as would wrangle with a saint on 'is own steps, and 'ave words with a angel over the palins, and for nothing else, but the sake of a row, as he glories in, cos as I said to 'im 'owever, in this world, could I 'elp the sweep a-sendin' 'is rammonure thro' the wall into 'is tent-bed, as he thought were the devil in the dead of the night; but, law, it's no use takin' no notice, of what he says, not but wot he's been a deal wuss since he took up with pollytics, and goes and talks agin free trade rubbish, at the "Goldin' Pig," every other evenin', leastways so Mrs. Dulston were a-tellin' me thro' 'er 'usban' bein' the same sort, and a usin' that same parlour, as is a reglar 'ot-bed for river-lutions as will flow over some day, and find their 'eads on Tower 'Ill, now as Temple Bar 'ave been took away, as was 'igh time, when it couldn't keep up without props under it.

Mrs. Dulston she's fond of pollytics too, and comes in to 'ave a jaw along with me, but I says to 'er I don't understand 'em, as seems to me all jaw, and no more use than free trade 'ave been, cos as old Sinful said it's all werry fine for to talk about free trade a-makin' our fortin, but it ain't done it, tho' that there Bright and Cobden were a-

talkin' about its doin' so jest arter I were married, and as we was to 'ave bread down to nothink, and coals as cheap as dirt, as is wot most coals turns out now-a-days; and as to wages they was to be that 'igh as the 'and-skilled workman might be a-goin' out in 'is own shay of a Sunday with 'is wife in silks and satins, and berried in plumes at last, leastways that were the rubbish wot Joe Barnes did used to talk, as he called perlitickle econermy; as Brown reglar shet 'im up, over thro' a-askin' who was to keep them 'ands as was throwed out of work down in Coventry, and other parts, thro' free trade.

"Oh!" says Joe, "they must go in for other industries."

"Yes," says Brown, "that's all werry fine; but a man as gets the sack of a Saturday night thro' the mill bein' shut up, can't walk out Monday mornin' into another mill, and begin to work at a new trade, so as to make 'is livin', cos, in the fust place, he can't find a trade ready as can take 'im in, and if he could he wouldn't know how to work it."

"Oh!" says Joe, "the few must suffer for the good of the many, and it's 'ard to make a consumer pay more jest to benefit some one else."

"Yes," says Brown; "but 'ow about the consumer as pays, we'll say, twelve shillin's a dozen for clarit wine; and 'as to pay double poor-

rates and income-tax, and other rates, to keep things a-goin', and be puttin' money into forriners' pockets all the time."

"Well," I says, "it certingly is a act of charity for to buy them wines of forriners, for if they was to drink it all theirselves, poor things, die they must in orful hagony, for arf a glass, leastways a mouthful, were nearly my death, and never should 'ave see mornin's light but for Ginger tea and a 'ot brick arter takin' some of that bottled stomich-ache, one werry 'ot night for supper, with a crab, and don't believe as I did swaller more than a tablespoon, for it seemed to go agin me, and I no sooner got it in my mouth than I give a rush for the back-kitchen sink, as Brown said were pricked, as Miss Pilkinton 'ad brought a bottle on in comin' along, a-sayin' as it were wot Gladstin drunk hisself and give his friends constant at 'is own table."

I says, "So I should think, to look at 'is winegar wisage, and no wonder he lost all his friends if that were 'is tipple."

As to being drunk with that stuff, it ain't possible, cos you'd be dead afore mornin' with arf a bottle, as would bring on spavins. If I'd my will, I'd persecute any licenced wittler as dared for to sell sich pison, as must undermind anyone's constitution; tho', for that matter, all them forrin

wines is the same belly-wengeance rubbish, in my opinion, and nothink like fine old British port and sherry for the Inglish constitution, as is the stuff to make your 'air curl, as the sayin' is."

Says Brown, "It ain't your line, old gal, to dip your beak into clarit, as a drop of somethink in the good old style, a large glass of brown brandy, 'ot, strong, and sweet, suits better."

"Well," I says, "I don't deny it; but not plenty on it, cos, as I always says, enuf's as good as a feast; but don't tell me about people must 'ave forrin things for to wear, tho' if they perfers 'em, all right, let 'em, but then they must pay for 'em, cos it's all rubbish about payin' the dooty, as wouldn't be more than a few shillins on a silk or satin, as nobody as could afford to buy such a dress would mind a-payin'. In course, the shops would try it on in risin' of the prices, but there'd be others as would spring up like mushrooms and undersell 'em pretty quick."

"Why," I says, "Joe, you know werry well as free trade knocked your poor father's busyness into a cock-'at, as the sayin' is, thro' bein' in the fancy jewelry and watchmakin' trade, as come in by shoals from over there, and reg'lar swamped im."

"Ah!" says Joe, "the Swiss is more industrious than our people. I see myself when I went

over there, as works early and late. Why, some on 'em works sixteen 'ours a day sometimes, Sunday and all."

So Brown says, "Too much work by six 'ours, as ten 'ours is as much time as any good 'ard-workin' man can do justice to 'isself and 'is imployer; cos, as to a idle waggerbone as strikes for wages, he'll never work, and it's all werry fine for a noble lord, as said, 'Ah! the sooner them Swiss leaves off workin' sich long 'ours, the better for them.' But they likes to work; and so, as they lives on the smell of a match, as the sayin' is, they can cut us out at work."

"Ah!" says Miss Pilkinton, "but we didn't ought to forget the cheap loaf."

I says, "'Ear! 'ear!"

"But," says Brown, "it ain't no use bread bein' a penny a loaf if you can't get the penny to buy it. Cos we was told as free trade meant forriners buyin' all our goods and lettin' them go into their countries free of dooty, and then we should 'ave their goods in exchange, as sounded fair."

"Well," I says, "I do 'ope as you won't never be a party for to exchange good, sound, 'olesome beer for that there rot-gut wine of theirn, cos if our people was to take to drinkin' sich rubbish, they'd soon take and dwindle down to mere ottermies,

the same as them forriners, and them Germins could come and wop us easy, as they did that Lewy Napoleon and all 'is tin-pot sojers. It's beef and beer as keeps up Inglish flesh and bone; and as to teatotal rubbish, why, it's all werry well for a parcel of old gals and lady-like young gents as ain't got the pluck of a mouse about 'em, and takes soda-water and milk and lemonade with their meals. No, wot I likes to see is a lot of fine young chaps, reg'lar bustin' with health, a-rowin' in boats or a-playin' cricket, as comes in all of a glow, and takes off their beer like Brittins on the top of a good steak. That's the stuff as makes men of 'em, as 'ave the pluck of lions, and would soon show the Germins the door, as comes a-sneakin' and a-workin' under price, as is ruinin' the country."

Says Brown, "Don't run down others; but wot I wants to see is the real workin' man a-doin' of 'is dooty by 'is employer and 'isself, as don't want no swells a-comin' to fidget and bother arter 'im and 'is 'ome, as 'ave got their work cut out to look arter theirselves; as 'ad better look at 'ome, when they're a-talkin' about neglected famlies, and if they don't break their wives' necks, does their best to break their 'arts."

"Ah!" I says; "and true your words is, only in course swell ladies don't bother their 'eads about their 'usbans' goins on, cos they know werry well

as it's no use; but if I were a duchess I'd teach my lord dook manners pretty quick, if I ketched 'im on the 'op a-goin' off with 'is pals, and a-leavin' me behind, as I'm sure no decent workin' man wouldn't dare do; and as to lookin' arter the workin' man jest for all the world as tho' he was a infant, it's all my eye, for give 'im plenty of work and fair pay, and he'll look arter 'is own morals, and if he goes a-breakin' of the law, why, then send 'im to jail; but do the same by the swell, and don't let 'im get off for payin' of a fine, as he won't never miss."

"Ah!" says Brown, "in my opinion they did ought to fine the poor man and send the rich one to prison, as is wot I calls even-'anded justice."

"Well," I says, "for my part I don't 'old with all this 'ere early-closin' and short 'ours' work, as I considers 'umbug, jest like givin' a child toys and sweets to amuse 'im instead of 'olesome food to nourish 'im. It won't 'urt no man to work ten 'ours a day; and as to the womin, if I 'ad my way, they shouldn't work at all, and I says certinly not them as 'ave got 'usbans and children to look arter; they didn't ought to, as a family of four is a pretty good 'andful for any woman as does her dooty by 'em. I'm sure a good many of them work-gals, as all calls theirselves young ladies now-a-days, 'ad far better go in for service, and live in a decent famly and keep theirselves respectable, so as to learn 'ow

to be good wives, instead of bein' dressed out in their 'ats and fancy dresses, a-goin' out of a evenin' a-takin' of their pleasure, as is all werry well now and then, but not every night; and turns out in the mornin' a-goin' to their work, all draggle-tail and muddy boots, as is 'arf asleep, and no time for to wash theirselves; and as to their 'air, it looks like a mask of filth done up in a lump, as no comb in this world couldn't never be got thro'. But as to tea-totalers, I were a-sayin' I considers a good respectable pub for to be a real blessin' where you can get wots 'olesome in the way of drinks, with wittles, if you wants it, throwed in at a moderate price."

"Yes," says Brown; "and them coffee-places as they're a-openin' is all right, too; not as I considers a pint of ale with your pipe will 'urt anybody, nor yet a four of gin cold if even you takes a couple, but not till you've done work."

"Well," I says, "Brown, you're the man as 'ave a right to speak, as can enjoy your glass in reason, tho' in course anyone might be overtook in a fault."

I see Joe Barnes a-sniggerin', so I says, "If them sniggers of yours, Mr. Joseph Barnes, is meant to illude to me, I don't mind ownin' as I 'ave 'ad a drop too much once or twice in my life, and don't consider myself no worse for that, as were only bein' overtook in a fault, and brought on by

'eat or bein' knocked up; but for anyone to say as I'm give to drink, I defies their words."

"There! that'll do, old lady," says Brown; "we all knows about it, tho' no one can say as you're give to lap, tho' you relishes the little as you do take in reason."

"Yes," I says, "because wot we 'ave is 'olesome and good, and not pison, as burns up the coats of your stomick and sets your brains in a flame, as is 'ow people commits murder, the same as that Irish tailor in the Lower Road, Islinton, as were 'ung, and they do say as he met 'is doom as he did ought to, but there wasn't no 'umanity-mongerin' over 'im, cos he didn't 'ave no sensashin trial with lords and ladies a-lookin' at 'im all the time, like a wild beast."

"Ah," says Brown, a-cuttin' in, "if I 'ad my way I wouldn't 'ave them trials turned into shows for nobody; and as to bad drink, it's downright murder arter all. I do 'ope as there will be a law as looks arter wot's unfit for 'uman drink, the same as 'uman food, and won't let parties 'ave the chance of buyin' pison either in meat or drink."

It's no doubt werry orful for to sell bad meat to poor people, but it's wuss to let 'em 'ave pisoned licker.

"Ah," I says, "there ain't no chance of that

cos them as makes the laws they sets and sips their port and sherry wines, as is the werry best, and don't think of wot's sold to the poor, as is that reduced as they ain't 'ardly got the 'art to find no fault, so swallers down any filth as tastes sweet and 'ot, as warms 'em up."

Says Brown, "We'll soon 'ave woman's suffrages and parlymint for you, old gal."

I says, "Don't jeer, Mr. Brown, as knows your lorful wife too well to think as she wants to go about spoutin' and neglectin' of 'er 'ome."

"Well," says Brown, "all as I wants to see is a woman a true wife, mother, daughter, and friend, and then she'll do a deal in the way of improvin' 'er 'usban, and bring up 'er son well, and may be reform her own father; cos, though it's 'opeless to look out for all the world bein' like a Sunday-school, yet there's a deal as wants mendin', and the women is the parties as did ought to put their 'ands to do it."

I says, "Right you are, cos wot's wrong in a man is downright devilish in a woman, and that's why I were so down on them Staunton wretches." For when Brown come in that day with that evenin' paper, as said as that wile wretch were to be let off altogether, and the rest not 'ung, I was put out. "Then," I says, "the devil certingly do take care of 'is own, the same as that

fieldmale as they called Mandlin somethink, as were found 'non provin' at Glasgow, as they do say is married in style somewheres; and 'ow any man as called isself a man could take up with sich a outrage to 'er sect puzzles me, as could rite them wile filthy letters ain't worth bein' called a 'uman bein'."

"Well," says Brown, "you did ought to listen to reasin, Martha, and bow down to the law, as certingly 'ave made a reglar fool of itself over them Stauntons, judge, jury, lawyers, and all; but yet, if it's right, it's right as they should 'ave the benefit of the doubt."

I says, "Don't talk to me. I never did 'ear sich a thing, to let that wile 'ussey go free like that, as is the wust of the lot. If there is a doubt, why don't they 'ang 'er and all, as I only wishes as she may get lynched the moment she sets 'er foot out of prisin."

Says Brown, "Don't talk foolishness, Martha, don't. They can't 'ang the nasty wretch if she ain't guilty by law."

"Well then," I says, "she did ought to be guilty by law, or gospel, or somethink, else wotever is the use of laws, and as to that judge and jury, they've made reglar fools of theirselves, and the sooner they're done away with the better."

"Well," says Brown, "they ain't much use, certingly; not if parties is a-goin' to be tried over again."

I says, "In course not, cos," I says, "if that there Cross 'ave got to try 'em all agin on the quiet, he might as well have the judges' swag, with their wigs and gownds throwed in for 'is perkisites. It's a reg'lar farce," I says, "cos, I suppose, all them as gets penal servitude for life will be out in a year or two, a-swellin' about, and showin' theirselves, as will be nice parties for a currycle, as the sayin' is."

Brown, he says, "It's my opinion as they'll 'ave to do away with laws and everythink else soon, for as it is the thieves and rogues is a-gettin' the upper 'and all over the world, and it will end in the roughs a-comin' in to reign over us, and then there'll be the army called out and no sojers to fight, cos they're all a-desertin'."

"Ah," I says, "the same as the milisher, as it would be a blessin' if they would, for a nice noosance they are all over 'Amstead 'Eath, and that's 'ow Jane Blemstid come to run away, as ended with twins in Lambeth Workus, and then found out as that feller 'ad got three wives afore, and a precious good job their a-sendin' on 'im to Ollerway, to cool 'is 'eels, as the sayin' is, for five years. But wotever was to be done with them

fools of women, as wasn't much more than gals, all a-starvin' with their children ?"

"Ah !" says Brown, "it's all 'rong all round, and is gettin' worse every day, and must end in a grand upset, and we shan't 'ave no law, nor yet order, and as to religion, why, it's all fightin' now-a-days."

I says, "Don't talk like that, Brown, 'owever can you, with them Church Congresses a-meetin' all over the place, like as they was a-doin' down at Croydon, and them parsons with their wives a-lookin' so 'appy, a-smilin', and a-lunchin', and a-dinin' all over the place."

"Yes," says Brown, "and the Archbishop a-sayin' as it were werry lovely to see 'em all sich good friends; tho' nearly every one said as every one else was 'rong.' As makes me downright sick, the same as wot they calls edication, as is a preshus good job for them as gets the building of them Board Schools, and is paid for to go and 'unt up the children, and see as they goes to school."

"Ah !" I says, "that's wot I considers a great liberty for to take with any one else's liberty as ain't a conwict, cos we all knows as it mayn't be conwenient to send a child to school every day, without a bit of boot to their foot, all thro' the slush and mud, as is wot I says to Mrs. Manders, as 'ad been fined over not sendin' of 'er children to school. Upon my word, if we ain't come to some-

think, I should like to know wot is to be done next, 'avin' of your 'ome broke into, and your children took from you, whether you likes it or not, and to be edicated without no religion like 'eathen Turks without with your leave or by your leave, in all weathers, and pre'aps without neither clothes nor shoes, and a bad cold, or it might be sickenin' for the measles or a bad sore throat, as is werry ketchin', let alone scarlet fever and other things as they might ketch besides, and not a-likin' your children to be in the streets a-goin' backwards and forards all day along with others, as uses langwidge to make your blood run cold, and ain't got no decency about 'em, and to be sent to prison thro' being a widder, for seven days, with no one to look arter five children, the youngest only six months, and the eldest not turned eight, and then talk about 'elping the poor, as is wot I calls downright bullyin' on 'em, and then to be a-pryin' and a-spyin' all about your 'ouse, and prowlin' about the street a-watchin' your place to see if the children goes out a-walkin' in school time, as is wuss than the press gang, and then to talk about Brittins never shall be slaves, why, it's downright nigger-drivin', as bad as them Germins, as wont let nobody call their souls their own, except old Beastmark, as wants to force every one for to foller 'im, but I'm sure we don't want no sich fellers 'ere, a-orderin' of us about, as would send

Spurgin is'self to prison for a-darin' to call 'is soul's 'is own, tho' he 'ave got thousins a-settin' under 'im as reglar waships 'im. As to poor Mrs. Manders, as I were a-sayin', if ever there was a 'ard case it's her, for I'm sure a-better 'usband than Manders was you wouldn't meet in a day's walk, not if you took it on bicycles, as a many does, and didn't ought to be knocked over by roughs, nor yet an old waggerbone of a turnpike man, as did all ought to be put down for noosances, like as Brown were a-sayin' it would be a deal better for Goverment to look arter the roads and bridges, and let people attend to bringin' up their children their own way; for I'm sure that Mrs. Manders she's been a slave to 'er family, and 'arf starved 'erself to keep 'em decent, and all 'er spare time at the wash tub, and can't afford to pay scoolin', let alone bein' obligated to keep 'er eldest at 'ome, to look arter the baby, while she's out at work to get a bit of bread for 'em."

A deal these 'ere 'umbugs as passes hacts of parlymint knows about the poor; besides, a man may be poor, and not like 'is 'ome broken in upon jest at dinner-time by a wisitor, as I'd soon settle if I 'ad my way; and Brown he declares he'd kick any wisitor out of doors as come a-pryin' into 'is place. I considers as it's a great liberty for to take with a poor man to come into 'is room, as is 'is

castle, tho' only a two-pair back; and then the feller as come to Mrs. Manders, he says, "Oh! I calls on your betters, and would insist on goin' up in a drorin'-room agin the servant's wishes only last week, and see a lady, and give 'er a talkin' to cos I met 'er children a-walkin' out in school time."

I 'appened to 'ave called in to see Mrs. Manders, so I says to 'im, "Then all as I got to say is, I'll be bound that servant were a gal, not a footman, and if you was to come to me I'd pin a dish-clout to your tail."

As might be a nice intrusion on anyone, for I 'ave know'd a party as did used to mend all the dirty things in her drorin'-room afore sendin' 'em to the wash, as ain't nice 'abits, in my opinion, but if parties likes it, that ain't no busyness of school boards a-sendin' their wisitors at all 'ours a-pryin' into your private affairs; and I'm sure there was poor Mrs. Weldin, she'd a struggle to make both ends meet, as the sayin' is, and were a-settin' in 'er slip with a cloud round 'er, a-unpickin' of 'er black sating in the drorin'-room, and I 'ave knowed parties as would get up a few fine things on the quiet, as you don't want it to be all over the place as you was cort with a black saucepan on the parlor fire as your cuffs and collars was a-simmerin' in.

No; I calls it downright impidence, as every Englishman's 'ouse did ought to be 'is castle,

whether he've got a helefant to purtect it or not; as is all werry well for the Prince of Wales, as in course collared a lot in Injier, where they runs about wild jest like pigs in the country lanes; and all as I've got to say if Inglish people is sich fools as to put up with it, why it will serve 'em right if next thing they 'ave a party of police comin' round to turn out the gas at eleven o'clock, or some tea-totalin' 'umbug come to see 'ow much supper beer you takes in, or whether the pot-boy brings you a quartern of sperrits along with it, as is wot some would like to do, no doubt.

In course, if parties is too poor to 'elp their children, let them 'ave scoolin' for nothink, but don't go and edicate the children agin their parents' wills. There'd be a pretty 'ow d'ye do if the Pope were to ketch 'old of Gladstin's grandchildren, and 'ave 'em all brought up Romins agin 'is will. It ain't fair as Spurgin should be allowed to say as no child shouldn't be taught as there isn't no other God but 'isn; nor yet that Bradlore and Moody and Sankey shouldn't 'ave it all their way escep' for them as likes 'em. I'm sure if I were a Turk I'd bring up all my little turkeys my way, but I don't want to interfere with my naybour as whether he's a Turk or not. Cos it's all werry fine a-talkin', but the Jews is a-gettin' that rich and powerful, as some fine day they'll want St. Paul's for a sinagog, and

make us all into Ebrer Jews, as is wot Dr. Cummin says we did all ought to be, and now in course as Dizzy is in the 'Ouse of Lords he could easy manige it with Queen Wictorier bein' so much in Scotland, as is more like Jews than Cristshuns, for I 'eard of one of 'em as said in 'is sermin as the man as would take a walk on the Sabbath were quite as bad as murder, not as I think it were anythink but 'is fun, for I see 'im myself that werry Sunday evenin' as tight as a drum, as the sayin' is.

But as to this 'ere School Board, it must be spoke about, cos it's past a joke when you've not only got to pay five shillin's fine and costs out of twelve shillin's a-week, as you can 'ardly earn by slavin' from morn till night, but are sent to prison, and so loses your work and your character, and all for wot? why, reglar cant about edication. Rubbish, as I calls it, for ain't I been in Merryker, and don't I know, there's a pretty set as they 'ave come to thro' bein' all edicated, and nice ways they've larned 'em, with nothink but bogus companies and swindlin' jobs all over the place; why, it's enuf to make your blood bile to 'ear children speak to their parents over there, and let alone the specimens of 'usban's and wives and 'appy 'omes as you sees there, and all as I've got to say is as there must be a deal as wants mendin' among us, but I don't think as we've got the right sow by the ear, as the sayin' is,

with this 'ere edication; for I'm sure the best parties I've knowed couldn't rite and read. But, in course, there's a deal of ignorance, and wot people wants to learn is their dooties, as every one can do, tho' they mayn't be no scolars, cos you can do as you would be done by, as the sayin' is, tho' no 'and at readin' or ritin', and knows 'ow to give full change tho' you couldn't do a sum to save your life, and knows your way about tho' hignorant of jograffy and can't tell wotever is the use of the globes.

MRS. BROWN ON CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

As to Clearpatrer's Needle bein' found, I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Padwick, a-settin' at work, did ever you 'ear sich rubbish in your life a-tryin' for to make anyone believe sich foolishness, as if it was easy for any one to find their own needle, let alone any one's elses, at the bottom of the sea, as there ain't a chance arter 'avin' been dropped all them years ago in the sand; for I'm sure if you only jest drops your needle, a-settin' at your own fireside, why, it's ten to one as you ever finds it agin, unless it should 'appen to run into any one's foot as is walkin' about without no slippers, or in a pair of them there purnellers, or be dropped on a chair or sofy. The same as old Mr. Grundy, as were that wictim to gout as he'd 'owl like a steam-ingin' blowin' off his steam, if any one come near 'im, and were a-goin' to kick out at 'is own gran'-dorter with 'is sound foot for a-comin' too close to 'is chair with a footstool, and give a shriek as brought up the werry lodgers, thro' a darnin' needle as went slap thro' 'is list shoe, and worked up in

'is great toe jinte, as would 'ave turned to harry-sipperlus but for 'is docter's care with constant poletices. As is why I always says as parties didn't ought to go about in their socks, as Brown will do, as 'arf my time is took up in mendin', and grafted 'im new 'eels the week afore last to three pair.

Tho', in course, it all depends a deal on the size of the needle, for as to Mrs. Portlock as, with all 'er weight, throwed 'erself into a easy chair with a fit of corfin in the passage, as wasn't 'ardly unpacked when we was movin', and went blue in the face, as I thought were 'er last, but turned out to be only a packin' needle as 'ad penetrated with hagony to the eye, and luckily not a wital part, as might 'ave set on a hartery and bled to death afore we could get her up, thro' bein' that lusty; and then didn't know at fust what she were a-strugglin' and a-plungin' about over in that chair thro' stammerin', as, in course, only increased 'er sufferins, as was that deep-seated as never come into nobody's 'ead but 'er own.

But as to this 'ere Clearpatrer's Needle, as were a Gipshun, as is the same as a gipsy, no doubt it was more like a skewer, and, in course, needles was needles in them days, as wouldn't never 'ave lasted all these years, and didn't get eat up with rust tho' incrusted in layin' in the sand as is dry as bran, but

would certingly blunt the pint of it if it didn't break it off.

Brown he's up in his Clearpatrer, as 'ave got 'istory to 'is fingers ends, and busted out a-larfin' at me, a-talkin' about the needle like that, a-sayin' as it were a old ainshent nobbylisk, the same as they been and set up in Paris, for to show the spot where they cut off the king's and queen's 'cad, the willins; as would do it agin, the waggerbones, only he's too sharp for to give 'em the chance; and lets that there Marshil lord it over 'em now, as, thro' being a sojer, knows wot's wot, and when the time comes will nobble that Mister Gambetter, and all sich kennels as is runnin' about the streets a-tryin' to upset everythink, with their pertrolium all over the place, and a shame, in my opinion, as we 'arbours such waggerbones all about Lester Square and them parts, as the women is wuss than the men. But in course, if it's a nobbylisk, as the Gipshuns 'ave give us, let's 'ave it by all means, but whyever call it a needle, tho' one myself to call a spade a spade, as the sayin' is, as am downright sick of the ways as parties goes on about all manner. For there was Mr. Ponder, a City Misshun, a-goin' on about Christmas time, a-sayin' all tea-time as them Stauntons didn't ought to 'ave been 'ung, and as Mrs. Staunton were a renewed charicter, and no doubt as 'er sister were a wessel.

"Well," I says, "I ain't a-goin' to 'ave no more jaw over them, as 'ad a fair trial first time, and the sooner as they was 'ung in my opinion the better, and then there'd 'ave been four wretches the less in the world."

"Oh!" says Mr. Ponder, "ain't it a orful thing to take 'uman life?"

I says, "Certainly, but why didn't they think of that afore they took that poor creetur's, the cruel cold-blooded wretches, as 'angin' is too good for. And as to them two snivellin' sneaks as calls theirselves men, why I'd 'ang 'em myself, and their two filthy trulls at their 'eels. If they was rich enough, in course they'd 'ave been made out mad, and sent to Bedlum to be cured, like that fieldmale as killed 'er children, tho' I'm sure, after lettin' off that young Treadway, as shot the poor old man in Pimlico, it's enuf to bring a judgment on us, as didn't ought to punish nobody never no more. I suppose it will soon come to doin' away with Judge and Jury, and gallus, with every one tried by the noosepapers; but if some of them parties as is so bloomin' merciful, and talks so lovely about pardinin' every one, I should like to know if they was pisoned or done away with theirselves wot they'd say, or if they had a favourite dog killed, let alone their only child suffocated, they'd be pretty down on them, as done it."

It's enuf to make any one sick, as I considers insults to the Judge and Jury, and all them lawyers as 'ave took the trouble to try and save 'em by fair means, to be told as they're a lot of duffers, and as parties as 'ave read the case in the papers knows best.

Wot I wants to know is, wot becomes of parties as is sent for penal servitude for life?

In course they don't keep 'em only but for a few years, and then lets 'em out to go and teach others 'ow to murder. If you kills a wild beast as kills a man thro' not a-knowin' no better, jest the same as we kills a sheep to eat 'im, a man as kills 'is fellow man ought to be killed ten times over. Any one as commits a murder is worse than a devil, and did ought to be put out of the world like wermin; or let them as is so fond on 'em, go and live with them on some diserloot highland, and there they can 'ave nice games together.

No doubt there's a many as is jest like them Stauntons in their 'arts, and would like to be able to get rid of them as they've robbed and injured; and that sweet, innercent Alice Rhodes and 'er hinfant, as she were so fond on, and Mrs. Staunton as wanted to live for 'er children's sakes, it's for their sakes as they did ought to 'ave been 'ung, so as them poor dear children shouldn't never know as they 'ad sich wile retches for parints.

But as I were a-sayin' about that there needle, long afore it started, 'owever will they get it 'ere, as they was a-talkin' about a-floatin' of it over, all the way in its own needle-case across the sea. So I says never, why it might come in collusion with a wessel, and run into it that sharp as would sink the Dook of Edinburrer 'isself, let alone the royal yott. Cos, in course, a needle will run into any one as comes in contract with it, partikler this one, thro' not 'avin' of no eye to see where it's a-goin' to.

Brown he were a-readin' to me all about that Clearpatrer, as that needle belonged to, as don't seem to 'ave been no great shakes 'erself, tho' I respects 'er for not marryin' 'er brother, tho' she was that bold a-goin' about on the water, a-showin' off 'er fine clothes, tho' not much on 'em, like that, jest to 'tice that there Roman gen'ral, as she were a-botherin' with 'er addresses, jest the same as parties did that there Gen'ral Useless Grant when over 'ere, poor man, as they would 'ave were a great sojer, tho' he 'ave 'ad the sense to keep 'is 'ead shet, as the Yankees says, so as not to let out wot he really was.

It's no use they're a-carneyin' 'im over, cos he can't get back none of that Allybammer money, as they did us out on, cos he ain't got no power no longer over in 'Merryker, and there's a fresh lot let in to look arter the money, as will no doubt

make as free with the till as them as 'ave gone afore 'em did.

I suppose as that there Clearpatrer fieldmale knowed as much about a real needle and thread as I do about the inside of the moon; a nasty idle 'ussey, with 'er shameful ways, as Brown says is all classics, as Shakespear 'ave showed 'er up.

I says, oh! in course, if that there William Shakespear rote about 'er, she must be all right with you, like the rest of that nice set of fieldmales as lived in 'is times, with 'is Lady Madbess, and that disgrace to 'er sect, that queen in 'Amlet, as 'ad took and married 'er own brother, and bounced it out as bold as brass over it, not as 'er own son did ought to 'ave killed 'er, as ain't no son's dooty, wotever 'is mother was; and as to Clearpatrer, she didn't 'ave no family, so did ought to 'ave knowed better, thro' not bein' a Roman Catherlic, like that there Anterny, as come a-cadgin' about, as a many of them sojers will do when off duty, and fine men too, like them Life Guards in their jackets, as is sojers every inch on 'em, from their caps to their 'ighlows, and 'ave been knowed to be noblemen in disguise, as in course nobody wouldn't know, dressed like that, and so 'ansom, as every one turns round to look at, with all the servant gals 'eads out of the winder both sides of the way.

But, as I says, in course that there Clearpatrer's

Needle is only a curiosity, jest to show as needles was inwented in them times, tho' never used till arter Queen Lizzybeth, but will soon be cut out thro' sewin' machines, as is all the go, the same as reapin' machines, as I see myself at work in the country; and, in course, if you can 'ave your corns cut by machinery, every one would be glad as well as the farmers.

I'm sure it's a pity as they can't pick 'ops with a machine, for of all the roughs as ever I did see, them parties as goes 'oppin' is the roughest; tho', poor things, many on 'em does it for a bit of bread, and the wust part is the lives they 'ave to lead, and partikler sich weather as they're often out in, night and day, as no negro slaves wasn't never like in this world; and no wonder they're drove to stealin' and all manner, as they live like beasts, and in course acts as such.

Brown he says as Shakespear 'ave rote a lovely play all about Anterny and Clearpatrer, tho' he don't make no mention of the needle.

"But," I says, "Shakespear is that long way over any one's 'ead in 'is langwidge, as I'm sure you can't tell wot he's talkin' about 'arf 'is time."

Brown he up and says, "That's so, but the reason as no one don't care for to go and see 'is plays, cos parties don't understand 'em, and them actors as can play in 'em, is either a-walkin' about the streets

out of work, or else obliged to go in for doin' the clown and panterloon busyness. Ah!" he says, and I see Brown were in earnest, "it's all werry fine for to blow about Shakespear being that fine langwidge, nobody won't set and listen to it, tho' there's some as says they don't go cos there ain't no one as can speak it."

I says, "Why don't they learn?"

Says Brown, "'Ow should they, any more than Latin and Greek could be learnt if there wasn't no masters to teach 'em. No, we're orful full of bounce about Shakespear, when we're a-talkin' about 'im to forriners, but when forriners comes over and says as they would like to go and see 'is plays, and 'ear that lovely langwidge, there ain't a theayter where it's done."

"Law," I says, "Brown, 'ow you are a-runnin' on, as can't 'ave no edication yourself for to understand them unknown tungs."

"No," he says, "I don't pertend not to understand all 'is grand sayin's, but," he says, "tho' he does use them fine words, yet you can ketch 'is meanin' as goes 'ome to the 'art."

"Well," I says, "I think as he might be a-ritin' about somethink better than sich a party as that there Clearpatrer, but," I says, "p'raps he rote it for to please that old cat Queen Lizzybeth, as thought 'erself lovely, and as all the men

was a-dyin' for 'er, and they do say follered 'em about, and took and cut off their 'eads when she were tired of em.

"But," I says, "it's a pity as they didn't bring that needle overland, now as they've 'ad a case made for it, as would come a deal safer by rail, and whyever they didn't send it out for to discover the pole with, as would 'ave gone straight to it, and cut through the ice with a steam injin to drive it easy."

Not but wot I'm sure we've got enuf to do at 'ome without a-goin' botherin' after no Poles, as the Rooshins can do a deal better than the Inglish, thro' bein' used to the cold, tho' they've been a-gettin' of it 'ot lately all round. Not as I believes 'arf, nor yet a quarter, as they puts in the papers about anythink as Brown brings 'ome of a night; and spells by the 'our together, all about Rooshins and Turks. For my part, I wish as they'd smash each other, and then for old Beastmark to interfere and get 'is 'ead punched.

Cos Roosher and Proosher is a nice pair with their pious Hemperors a-talkin' about 'evan. Not as I 'olds with Turks any more than them Mormins; but, law, them Greeks is a 'orful lot, like that willin in the papers, as tried to get money out of that innercent young gal as he met in the Park, thro' a-threatenin' for to show 'er letters, and I'm

glad as she were that clever to get some on 'em back afore she give 'im in charge, cos there's no knowin' wot he wouldn't 'ave done with them.

Not as ever I rote anythink, not even to Brown, as I should care about bein' published afore a magistrate, but then in course I knowed as Brown were respectable, and not a permiscous Greek as I'd met often, afore ever I give 'im any incouragement for to foller me.

Miss Pilkinton she's been that full of this 'ere Clearpatrer's Needle gettin' 'ere safe, as she says will be set up for wot she calls a monylog of fieldmale industry, as is nat'ral in 'er, thro' bein' in the millinery line 'erself, not as she 'ave any occasion for to set close to it now, thro' a little independence as 'ave fell in. She come in full of it to tea three Sundays ago, and give us a dose on it as were all rong, leastways so Brown told me when he come 'ome, as she'd been and got out of a play as she'd see acted two or three years ago, as made out as Clearpatrer were found in a pirrymid, where she 'ad been berried alive arter as she'd been and pisoned 'erself ou the top of it, to get away from the Romans, thro' a-suckin' asses' milk out of a basket of figs, as is certing death when took together, and as a party in the name of Anterny, as loved 'er, he took and climbed up arter 'er and died on the spot, thro' them same asses a-takin'

and bitin' on 'im to death. So died at 'er feet, while she kep' on a-'ollerin' out "Oh, Hanterney;" leastways that's wot the young lady kep' on a-sayin' in the play as were acted at Dreary Lane, and Miss Pilkinton she see it with 'er own eyes, and didn't think much on it, tho' it were rote by Shakespear, as she considers a duffer, as is why Brown called 'er a ignorant old tabby, cos if any one says a word agin Shakespear Brown's down their throats arf a mile, like a knife, as the sayin' is.

But Miss Pilkinton she says as she doats on the play, not as ever she can tell you wot it's all about. In my opinion she don't really care for the play, but, like a great many more, goes jest for a outin', and were 'ow I were persuaded to go and see "Our Boys," as they told me 'ad been a-runnin' for 'undreds of nights, jest like that Merrykin at Lilly Bridge.

I says, "Wot a shame for their parents to let boys go on like that, as I considers a downright sin for anyone to run and walk theirselves to death, and as to that party as is a-doin' of it at Lilly Bridge, it's murder in a-tryin' to walk fifteen 'undred miles in as many 'ours, as 'ave nearly gone mad once over the job, as is all werry well for Merrykins, as is arf wild Injins, as always walks, poor things, thro' not 'avin' no conweyances in a state of natur."

But, law bless you, when I got to that theayter there weren't no boys to be seen, nor yet runnin', tho' there was one party as were quite the gentleman, as 'ad been in the cheese and butter line, and talk of the langwidge of Shakespear, why he'd give Shakspear a 'ole dixonary and beat 'im, as were that amusin', tho' a tender art. Wot upset me was any party as let lodgins 'avin' sich a slovenly gal for to wait on the lodjers, as talked about cleanin' of boots but never didn't clean 'erself, as I wouldn't 'ave kep' a 'our myself, tho' a nice lookin' gal, and they all seemed to like 'er werry much; but, as I said, why not wash 'er face? I did feel disappointed at not seein' them boys; but a party as set close to us were a-tellin' another party as they were both out for a 'olliday, but was a-comin' back to run on for a thousand nights, as I wish 'em well thro' it, and fully espects as they'll be reglar knocked up, let alone the shoe-leather as they must 'ave wore down to the ground.

Miss Pilkinton says as they're a-goin' to show Clearpatrer's Needle when it fust arrives, for the benefit of distressed needlewomen, as will be a great charity, no doubt; but wot I always says about needlewomen bein' distressed, let them work better, and then they'll be paid more than slop work, and won't want no charity, as is the same with all them as can work, they did ought to be made to work

fair 'ours for fair pay. Not as I 'olds with strikes, as will end bad some day, with bloodshed.

No doubt a many thinks as they're a-goin' to do a great deal of good to the workin' man with these unions, but, as Brown says, if the masters was to give way for the sake of the 'ard workin' 'onest man, he'll soon be obliged to give way to a lot of idle waggerbones as will want more pay for less work, till they'll want to be paid for doin' nothink at all.

No man didn't ought to work more than ten hours a day, but they did ought to be 'onest 'ours' work, that's what Brown says; and as to wages, they must depend on the workman and 'is trade.

And as to forriners comin' to work, they needn't do that, for they do plenty of work for us at 'ome, and sends it 'ere free of duty, while the Inglish workman, he's got to pay taxes.

Brown, he's one of them as never did believe in free trade, unless you can 'ave it all over the world alike; not that he's one as would wote for taxin' food.

In course I don't understand no pollytics, as parties didn't ought to meddle with, in my opinion, unless they're a-goin' to get a livin' at it, as many a chap can do easy with the gift of the gab, as the sayin' is, and there's thousins as 'ave made a good livin' out of before now, and will agin, thro'

a-gammonin' the workin' man as he's 'is friend, and so gets money out on 'im. As no doubt this 'ere Dr. Kidneely will act straight, as is a-goin' to get us all our rights under the Charter, as is wot nearly got Frost 'ung years ago, as died quite peaceable the other day in 'is bed.

Talkin' of Kidneely, in come Miss Pilkinton a-leapin' for joy like, and a-sayin' "He's found! he's found!"

I says, "Found wot?"

"Oh," she says, "I'm so glad they've found Arthur Ortin alive, so that there noble claimant must be set free; ooray!"

I says, "Wherever 'ave they found 'im."

"Oh!" she says, "over in Merryker, as is a loonatic asylum in Parrymatter."

I says, "I should say as Parrymatter weren't strong enuf for lunatics to wear; but," I says, "'ow do they know as it's 'im?"

She says, "Why, by 'is fottygraft, as that there nobleman as is a-languishin' in Dartmoor knowed at a glance, as will be out in no time, leastways under three months, in spite of juries and judges and jesyits, as is all bribed for to keep 'im out of 'is rights."

So when Brown come in I told 'im, and he says, "All right; I've got a Tichbung bond as I give a shillin' for."

"Then," says Miss Pilkinton, "it's worth five pound now, and will be worth 'undreds, cos he's a-goin' to reward them 'ansome as stood by 'im when he was down."

So Brown says to her, "You give me a sov'rin and I'll give you the bond to make as much out of it as you can."

"Well," she says, "I don't know no more than I've 'eard; but a party as lodges in our 'ouse, he says as they're a-buying them up like wild in the city."

"Ah!" says Brown, "then you can tell your fellow lodger where there's one to be had cheap, and wot's more, I'll trust you with it to sell for me, and give me the money when you get it."

She didn't seem to fancy takin' it, but yet wanted for to keep on jawin'.

So Brown up and says, "I don't want to hear no more about the blackguard, for that he is, whether the right man or the wrong; so let's drop 'im, and there's the bond if you wants it."

She only give a toss of the 'ead, a-sayin' "'Ow 'ard it is to make parties believe in the innercent."

Brown kep' on a-smokin', and didn't say another word, and right he was not to say no more.

For I'm sure the sight of a fat man in the street gives me a turn, cos there's sure to be some fool as 'ollers out "Roger" arter 'im, as gives me

the jumps, and is werry insultin' to a party, as may be respectable, tho' run to flesh, as the sayin' is. But, as I were a-sayin', jest to change the subjic, "Wherever are they a-goin' to put this 'ere needle when it gets 'ere?"

So Miss Pilkinton she says, "On the Tems Imbankmint."

I says, "That's a damp spot for a needle, as 'ave been a-layin' in burnin' 'ot sand so many thousin of years, as I suppose Clearpatrer took and dropped it out of the winder, and 'ave got all incrusted with sand, like the same as I see a bottle as 'ad been in the sea for years, and come up all weeds and barnacles, and them iron wessels as we all know will get incrusted inside and out, like a tea-kettle, or anythink as is left in a cellar, as I remembers as is the same with port wine, and that's why Alderman Wittles were that anxious as they shouldn't never disturb the crust in fetchin' of it up."

So Brown he says, "Wot a woman you are. Why, it's a stone."

I says, "I dare say, cos I remember you a-readin' me out of the paper about stone tools bein' found in some old ainshent part, as was used afore the flood, as most likely the Ark were built with, as must 'ave been well put together to stand all that rain; and I've 'eard say as there's naked savidges

as ain't got no escuse for their indecent 'abits, cos they can use the needle when they wants it, as they makes out of large thorns, as shows when there's a will there's a way, and I must say as them parties as bathes so close in shore at Margit, didn't ought to dress that light, for a bald-'eader come slap close by me, as were 'angin' by the rope out at the end of the bathin'-machine, as give me sich a turn as I let go the rope, and up went my 'eels and down went my 'ead, and if the party as were bathin' me 'adn't been down the steps in a jiffey, and arter me like a shot, I should 'ave been took out to sea, and floatin' about now."

We was at Margit when there was all this row about Clearpatrer and 'er needle, as 'adn't 'ove in sight, but were brought up fust thro' Mrs. Praddle's little boy a-pickin' up a paper of pins on the sands, as put it into Miss Pilkinton's 'ead about this 'ere needle not bein' far off.

So I says, "Well, I do 'ope as that there 'Gyptian needle is better than Margit pins, for of all the rubbish it's them, as will bend under your werry fingers like putty, and go in that crooked as'll scratch you frightful 'arf round your waist."

I remembers Mrs. Welkins baby a-swallerin' one, leastways it got down 'is little bussim, as were bein' undressed over night, and found three days arter in the creases of 'is fat neck, as green as

grass, as proved to me wot I always suspected, as she never washed 'im proper, as were a rank sloven 'erself, as would claw on 'er gownd, and do 'er 'air with frissettes and that beastly grease; and no wonder she found wot she did on the child, as weren't no more the lodgin's than me, as was as clean as print, and as sweet as a nut.

She was a beast of a creetur, never 'appy off the jetty, as certinly is werry pleasint with that new estenuation, as carries you right out to sea; and there was that woman all day long a-dawdlin' about with a rubbishin' novel in 'er 'and, and a young feller a-'angin' about, as she told me were 'er brother; only she says, "Don't say a word to Welkins when he comes down on Saturday, cos they ain't friends, and he's forbid me to speak to 'im, thro' property."

I didn't make no anser, not as I believed 'er; but, thro' lodgin' in the same 'ouse, didn't want no words, when meetin' constant.

Well, them two was always out together, and I knowed as she was always a-givin' of 'im money, for she borrered some of me, sayin' as he were out of a sitivation.

So I says, "Then why don't he go and get one, and not be a-idlin' of 'is time down 'ere."

She says, "Oh! he's delicate; mother died in consumption, and so did two sisters, as was twins."

"Well," I says, "I think he's likely to die of consumption of ale and sperrits, for I see 'im a-dodgin' in and out of pubs, and more than once I see 'im bring a bottle of sperrits to the jetty."

Well it were a Thursday as we all went for a stroll across by Westgit, as is a new part, close agin Margit. We got along by the cliffs, and I were soon tired, and set down a-'oldin' the baby, while them two walked on.

I wasn't a-lookin' arter 'em, when all of a suddin I 'eard a yellin', and see that young feller a-runnin' like mad, without 'is 'at, and a man a-pitchin' into 'im, and Mrs. Welkins a-screamin' ten thousin murders. So I jumps up and 'urries to 'em, and then I see as the party with the stick were Welkins.

So I 'ollers out, "Don't kill the man," as made Welkins stop and come up to me.

I says, "'Owever, could you 'ave the 'art to pitch into your own wife's brother?"

He says, "I'll break every bone in 'is skin, if ever he comes near my place agin, as 'is no better than a common thief, as stole my watch off my own mantelpiece, and got the blame laid on a poor servant gal, as I warned 'im I'd give it 'im, if ever I ketched him comin' near my wife."

Welkins he were as white as death, when up

come 'is wife a-sayin' "'Ow dare you strike my brother?"

He says, "I've warned him, and you too."

She says, "He's my brother, and I will see 'im and 'elp 'im too."

He says, "Yes, and he'll 'elp you to get drink as is bein' your death, as you swore to me solem you wouldn't touch another drop, if I'd let you come to Margit; and here I come down to 'ear a nice character of you at the lodgins, as 'ave given me warnin' to turn out, with a cupboard full of empty bottles, and over two pounds owin' at the pub. Now," he says, "I'll take you 'ome this evenin', and give you one more chance, and arter that I'll just take and break up the home, and send the child to my mother."

I felt as he were right, and so I told 'er, and got 'er to go 'ome with 'im that werry evenin', so there may be 'opes as she may turn over a new leaf, as the sayin' is, cos it's a long lane as 'ave no turnin'; and 'er name were Lane, and so were 'er brother's, so let's 'ope they'll both pull straight in the long run.

It reglar upset me that row did, and give me a turn, and the evenin' turned out that wet and windy, so I didn't go to the 'sembly rooms, as is a reglar pallis, but stopped at 'ome and 'ad a sausage and mashed tater for supper, thro' it bein' quite

cold enough for pork, when you knows where it comes from.

I went to bed about ten, not espectin' Brown, but never again will I take lemon peel in a little drop of sperrits and water, as I took, all thro' bein' chilly, as was the best unsweetened. I remembers goin' to bed, but nothink more till I found myself in a bathin'-machine with a strange man a-draggin' me out to sea by the 'air of my 'ead, as I were afraid as the string would give way.

I didn't dare speak till I dashed up agin a rock, as I caught 'old on, and set down a-'oldin' on for life.

Up come a whale a-ollerin' "I'm alive."

I says, "You're werry like a whale," as I see my self on the way to Merryker, both a-goin' and a-comin'.

He says, "I've come to tell Orton as he's alive."

I says, "You may be a whale, but in my opinion you're foolish in your 'ead;" but he give a slap with 'is tail as knocked me off as near as a toucher; but I says, "This aint never a rock as I'm on."

"Whoever said it was," says a sweet gentle woice in my ear, and there set Queen Wictorier a-lookin' quite young agin.

I says, "'Owever did your grashus get to Margit?"

She says, "'Ush, I'm come on the quiet, I stole

away, for I can't stand Balmoral, with one of them Ministers always a-watchin' over me, a-pretendin' as he's in attendince, as if I wanted 'im to wait on me, as would as lief put on the coals myself as ring for the gal, only when you've just washed your 'ands for a bit of work, you don't feel inclined to sile 'em."

I says, "It's werry sad about this ere whale a-dyin'."

"Oh!" she says, "it's a good thing on the 'ole, it may check these forriners as is comin' over for every rubbishin' escuse, and tho' he did pertend as it were only the Ackwaryum as he come for, I knows werry well as old Dizzy would 'ave worreted my life out to ask 'im to Winsor."

"Wot?" I says, "jest for all the world as if he was Prince of Whales."

"Oh!" she says, "he's a reglar Tartar, tho' he sticks up for the Turks; but," she says, "I won't 'ave it. I don't want no war, and that's why I'm glad as Willyam Hewitt 'ave took to cuttin' down trees, as amuses 'im and don't 'urt nobody."

I says, "Who's to be next Pope?"

She says, "I've rote on the strict q. t. to Beastmark, to say if he ain't a-goin' to take it 'isself I wish as he'd get it for Dizzy or Willyam Hewitt, as is both a-tryin' for it."

I says, "In my opinion, it will be Kidneely or Wolly."

Jest then I 'eard a woice as said, "Wouldn't you like it yourself?" and there stood the Prince of Wales all smiles, as said to 'im,

"No, sir, if I ever do go into the Church, make me Archbishop of Cantleberry, as can give dispensations, and would do anythink as your Royal 'Ighness pleases, and do 'ope as your good lady is well after all that nussin', and no doubt that boy 'ave growed werry much thro' bein' in bed so long."

"Here I am to speak for myself," says the Princess. "I'm all right, and don't you believe a word of all the gossip as you hear about me, as shall be glad to be out of Clarence 'Ouse, as is pokey work, and no wonder Alesandrowner is in the sulks over it, and likes Malta best; and if she's pleased we're all pleased."

"But," I says, "bless my 'art, wot a mess them Turks and Rooshuns 'ave made on it, as was a-goin' to swaller up Turkey 'ole, but ain't been able to get a feather out of 'is tail, and got a good 'idin' in tryin' for to do it."

"Wait a little longer, as the song says," says Beastmark, as were a-settin' by a-eatin' of sassages and sourkrout out of 'is cap. "I tell you wot it is, I'm jest a-lettin' them Turks go on a-winnin' the day, then I means to pick a quarrel with someone so as to go in, cos I can't 'ave Roosher knocked

over, cos I wants 'er 'elp when I makes my next war on France, and means to 'ave 'Olland."

I says, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, as is a reglar Guy Fox a-tryin' to blow up every one."

So he turns and gives me a leer, and says, "Come, come, Martha, my dear! Why for you always so down on me, as will pay you 'ansom if you rites me up; and you know I've got all that French money put away safe, and I means to 'ave twice as much some day when I inwades Ingland."

I bust out a-larfin', and says, "Well, I always thought you was a old Germin sassage 'ead, but I didn't think as you was sich a fool as to talk of inwadin' Ingland, and all as I've got to say is, Come, if you dare! Jest show your nose, and we'll give it you; we won't trouble our sojers to turn you out; why, us womin would do it, and give you such a 'idin' as would make you recollect 'ow your old Dutch mother warmed you when you was in petticoats."

"'Ush, Martha, my dear!" says Queen Wictorier; "the Prince is only in fun."

"Well," I says, "I wasn't; and he may buy up a lot of parties to rite all sorts of lies for 'im, but he won't get me; and your grashus 'ad better keep your royal eye on 'im, or he'll be a-pisonin' your own grandchildren agin you; and am glad to

'ear as them young people is a-turnin' out well over there, and to think as you may be a great-grandmother before a year is out, and shall be glad to 'ear as you're a great-great-grandmother, tho' nobody to look at you wouldn't believe it, as shows wot a good life will do, for I remember you well bein' a delikit gal, as always looked pale, with your 'air in ringlets, a-comin' out of Kensinton Pallis with your ma."

"Why," she says, "Martha, you don't look the hage to remember that."

I says, "There's four years atween us; so remembers you well thro' bein' about Kensinton when a gal; but," I says, "wotever are you a-goin' to do with this 'ere Clearpatrer's Needle?"

"Oh!" she says; "that's one of old Dizzy's fads. Bother the needle!"

"You'll escuse me, mum," says a woice, "but pre'aps when a-speakin' on me, you'll call me Beckinsfield."

"'Oity toity," says Willyam Hewitt, as were 'ackin' at a tree close by, "'ere's 'airs from a party as never 'ad a granfather, then he called ole clo."

"If I ketches you a-notchin' them trees, I'll 'and you over to the Woods and Forests," says Queen Wictorier, with a frown.

Willyam Hewitt dropped 'is axe under 'is arm as if it were a umbreller, and were a-sneakin' away.

"I like 'im a-talkin' about granfathers," says Dizzy, "'is own were sich a swell, leastways, not at sea," he says, with a sneery larf, as made Willyam Hewitt turn a reglar green with rage, a-mutterin' "I wish you was a tree."

So I turns on Willyam, as never were a pet of mine, cos I can't a-bear them parties as never knows their own minds, tho' I must say as I don't think as he 'ave been well treated, since Queen Wictorier give 'im the sack, tho', in course, she done it quite like the lady, and would no doubt 'ave give 'im a character, leastways, a ritten one, as is all she got with 'im, cos he 'adn't never been in place before, but certingly there was parties as were reglar fornin' and flatterin' afore 'im when he were in place, as won't now even give 'im a recommendation in ritin', nor 'ire 'im to wait.

So I spoke to 'im civil, and says to 'im "'Owever you can stick up for them Rooshuns, bothers me to think."

"Oh!" he says, "they're Christshuns as I believes in, and goes agin the Pope, as I 'ates the very name on, and longs to see 'is overthrow."

"Well," I says, "if them Rooshuns is Christshuns, I'd rather be Turks, but," I says, "my 'usban, as is a party in the name of Brown."

"Wot's your wull?" says a woice in my ear.

I give sich a start, for there I was up in the rumble of the Queen's carridge, a-sittin' with John Brown, a-lookin' down on the crown of Queen Wictorier's bonnet.

I says, "I'm glad to have a chat with you, for I wants to know whether that dear, nice young gal Beetriss is a-goin' to get off."

"Aweel, ye ken, there's just a wee bit difficulty, because she don't want 'er sister to look doon on 'er, and there's no another Scotchman as we can get for 'er."

I says, "Well, in course, they can't all marry the Scotch, but why not try a Irishman."

John Brown give sich a whistle, as made Queen Wictorier look round and say—

"'Ave I not said scores of times as I will not 'ave you a-whistlin' in my ear, and would make you go and ride postilion, if it wasn't for your kilt, as would make you look ridiculous."

I says, "And you didn't ought to whistle at sea, as is sure to bring up the wind, and 'ere it is," for I 'eard a crash and felt the place a-rockin' about.

So I ketches 'old of a mast a-feelin' as I might be washed overboard.

"Let go," says a woice, as I thought were John Brown.

I says, "I shan't, for I'm sure this 'ere wessel

is a-sinkin', and I can't swim ashore thro' not 'avin' of a life belt."

"Lay down with you, do," says he.

"I won't," I says.

"Then I'll make you," says he, a-seizin' me by the harm.

I looks round and if the place wasn't full of Turks and Rooshuns.

I says, "Mussy, I'm Inglish, as my name is Brown."

"You're mad, I think," says the woice.

"I ain't," says I.

"Then wake up, don't be a fool."

I says, "That's my Brown, by the langwidge; but," I says, "but I'll sell my life dear," and reglar struck out with both arms. A great big Turk ketched 'old on me and give me sich a shake as made my teeth chatter.

So I says, "It's them Rooshuns as is a-firin', and 'ave been and sent a shell thro' the washus roof. 'Elp," I says, with a scream, "I've got 'old of Clearpatrer's Needle as Queen Wictorier 'ave give me, and I won't let it go."

"Wake up, you old grampus, do," says that old Turk; and give that wiolent shake, as I says, "I'll acquaint Queen Wictorier with your behaviour," and turns round, and if there wasn't my own Brown a-standin' afore me, jest come off a journey.

So I says, "Mussy on us, Brown, wot ever 'ave 'appened."

He says, "I don't know, but I've 'ad nice work to get in to this room, and 'ad to bust open the door to find you a-clingin' to the bed-post, and a-goin' on like mad, as'll do yourself a mischief some night with your wagaries."

I says, "My dreams is that 'orful, as I did ought to be tied down in bed like Mrs. Clisby's gal, as would walk in 'er sleep, and were ketched four or five times with the winder open, as she were a-goin' to throw 'erself out on, with nothink but 'er night-gown on to break 'er fall."

"Well," says Brown, "you must sleep on the ground-floor, for if you goes a-throwin' of yourself out of winder it ain't you so much as will be 'urt, but the passers-by."

I says, "You're a nice feelin' 'art for a 'usban," and I couldn't 'elp a-sheddin' tears when I was got into bed, as was a-flowin' silent till I fell asleep.

When we eard as Clearpatrer's Needle 'ad been and went down, case and all, to the werry bottom of the sea, and were left a-stickin' there, I did think as Miss Pilkinton would 'ave went mad, poor thing, as 'ad set 'er 'ole 'art on seein' of it, and I must say as I give it up for a bad job, unless they could go down in a divin'-bell with a loadstone,

and fish it up. Besides, we 'ad other things to think on, for them slorters and massacrees was a-gettin' that bad as they give me the creeps every night afore goin' to bed, partikler with nothing but Burglarian 'trocities all about, as was takin' place nightly.

I says, "Brown," I says, "don't go on a-readin' about them Burglarian orrers jest a-goin' to bed, as I shan't get a wink of sleep all night, a-layin' awake a-thinkin' about the 'ouse bein' broke open and preaps both on us murdered in our beds, with our bit of silver in the drawers, as tho' it is only a few spoons and my grandmother's tea-pot, as I must say as I shouldn't like to lose, with my life throwed in."

So Brown, he says, "I won't read no more if you don't care to 'ear it; but as to your not a-sleepin', old gal, I should jest like to see anythink as could keep you awake arter your supper and a warm night-cap."

I says, "Don't be a-jokin', Brown, with your night-caps," I says; "do you think as I could sleep quiet with the thoughts of you bein' murdered in my 'ead, the same as Mr. and Mrs. Bonner, as lived out Chisilhurst way, and was murdered in the dead of the night by their own butler, as rode up to town on 'orseback the fust thing in the morning, for to break the news to their own

son, and only found out thro' a bit of 'is 'air as the poor old gentleman 'ad pulled out in the struggle; as brought in them night bolts, as you opens the door by pullin' a bell rope at your bed-head, but my dear mother never considered safe, thro' rememberin' a old lady in Battersea Rise as 'ad one as went 'rong, and couldn't get the door open all day, as was too strong to be busted, and was werry near starved to death, till they put a boy in at the winder, as were that narrer as no 'uman body couldn't pass, as wouldn't suit me thro' a-dreadin' fire."

"Well," says Brown, "I don't think as you're one to be done out of your sleep, and you needn't lay awake for fear of burglars, as ain't likely to come to sich a 'ouse as ours."

I says, "I don't know about that, for little fish is sweet, as the sayin' is, and I'm sure that gal as lived along with us last owes me a grudge for turnin' of 'er off in a instant, a impident minx, a-'avin' of follerers to tea and supper without leave, and usin' my best chiney along with my silver tea-pot, let alone the wittles, as I shouldn't 'ave found out if she 'adn't forgot to empty out the tea-leaves afore puttin' of it back in my cupboard, as blowed the gaff in course, as the sayin' is, when I took it out weeks arter and found it all mildewed."

So Brown didn't read no more robberies, nor

nothing like that no more that night; for as to that Penge case, I won't 'ear no more about it, cos it's all a farce a-tryin' wretches like them, and then lettin' of them off, as did ought to 'ave been 'ung four times over, partikler that 'ussey. Brown he were savidge at that trial a-goin' 'rong, and would have rote to the papers, only he considers as it's downright impidence in parties for to go a-interferin' with justice been done.

"Yes; but," I says, "you forget 'ow them as rites in papers 'as to slave for wot brings in a bit of bread, and in course it ain't no paper's dooty for to see about justice or judgment bein' done by them lawyers, as would take and put in anythink or anybody for that matter, so long as it were news; but," I says, "if these 'ere Burglarian 'trocities is a-comin' 'ome to our werry doors, it's 'igh time as somethink were done, and all as I got to say is, I don't care whether it's Turks or Rooshuns, don't let 'em try any of their Burglarian ways on me, not as I'd care to fire agin out of the winder at my time of life; but our kitchen poker, or even 'oly shovel, would soon settle their hashes, the waggerbones, as is nearly as bad as the Rooshuns, and would make a Turk blush to steal a poor woman's bit of coal, the same as them Provers did from Mrs. Preedy's cellar, as a bit of fire were 'er only comfort, thro' bein' that roomatic,

and couldn't only manage 'arf a ton that Christmas, as is why I do 'ate lodgins, tho' they may pretend to give you a cellar as will lock, and then go with a false key and take a shovelful as bold as brass on the quiet; and, as I said, it were all rubbish about burglars, as don't break in for coals, nor yet wood neither, tho' they might strip a pantry, as the sayin' is.

I never shan't forget one Burglarian trocerty, as were jest about Christmas time, as Brown were called away sudden from 'ome, as were uncertain about gettin' back. So I says, then I'll jest go and stop a day or two along with Mrs. Preedy, as 'ave parlours with them Provers, as lets all the 'ouse, with a lady constant in the drorin' rooms, as pays two guineas a week, and out of town nearly all the time, and 'underds of pounds left behind, as is some of the loveliest cheyney as ever were seen, as is real cheyney, for 'er own son looted it from out of that there Hemperor of Cheyney's own pallis, that time as we and the French took and burned everythink right and left along the river, tho' they do say as the French took all the best things, and made our sogers that savidge, thro' only a-comin' in for the second best pickin's, as was lovely silks and all manner.

It's lucky as Queen Wictorier never 'eard of the plunder as were a-goin' on, or she'd 'ave made 'em give it all back, as ain't like Queen 'Lizzbeth, as Brown

were a-readin' about to me, as did used to send out 'er ships for to rob on the 'igh seas, and 'ad 'er share of the swag when they come 'ome, as ain't wot I calls respectable Queen's high ways.

Not but it's all the same all over the world, and as to the way as them Merrykins is a-murderin' of them poor denuded Injins, it's enuf to make your blood bile.

I certingly were put out about Brown a-goin' away jest at Christmas, as is a time I likes; not so much for myself as for others, specially the young. In course it only does come once a year, except at sea and in Roosher, where we 'eard say there's two Sundays comes together, thro' a-gettin' 'rong with the sun, as in course won't stop for nothink nor nobody; so if you don't keep up with him, must be naturally left behind, the same as when I was a-goin' to Luton to see Liza, as I'd promised to stop with, thro' 'er 'avin' been disappinted in 'er nuss, and not 'avin' no confidence like in 'is mother, as never 'ad but 'im, as were brought up by 'and, and never expected, so nothink ready, and 'ad to have a clothes basket for a cradle, as the porter put me in the 'rong carridge at Euston, so was took to Bedford, and wanted five pound to take me back on a Injin all to myself, as might run away easy with only my weight behind, so went in a open shay, as nearly give me my death, let alone the

'orse a-boltin' three times along a dark road, but couldn't kick me out of the shay, nor yet the boy as drove me, thro' bein' wedged in that tight, and didn't run into nothink but a 'ay-stack close agin Liza's 'ouse, as turned us over, but fell soft and no bones broke, nor yet no 'arm done, but werry prowokin', for I got there arf a 'our too late, as shows that you didn't never look for'ard to nothink, not even Christmas, for I'm sure I did look for'ard to that one when we asked Mrs. Kilby to come up and see us, as is Liza's mother-in-law, with a good bit of property; not as we cared about that, but wished 'er to be with us, so when she said as she'd come with 'er son along with Liza and 'er two children, I said as we'd 'ave a pleasant time on it, and so we should 'ave 'ad, bar axidence, as will appear.

Brown he gets on werry with Liza's 'usban', thro' bein' both good tempers, as rather pities 'im thro' bein' brought up in the country, so don't know nothink to speak on, tho' a good 'usban' to our gal.

I cannot say as I cares for 'is mother as 'ave settled four times, and 'er last, in the name of Kilby, give it up arter one month, and no wonder, for of all the women to talk as ever I did see, that Mrs. Kilby beats 'em 'oller, tho' when fust I knowed 'er I took to 'er thro' a-thinkin' as she

were a kind-'arted woman, tho' that lusty as might be took for a feather-bed in a sack, for all the figger as she is; but yet one as feels inwards, for I'm sure when she berried Bullock, as were 'er third, there wasn't no trace of a tear nowhere's about 'er, not wisible to the naked eye; but when she come and stopped along with us the week follerin' I'm sure 'er sobs at night was 'art-rendin', tho' Brown did say, "Rubbish, why it's snores." But in course, no one can't tell wot another feels inward; and tho' Bullock was a temper as I couldn't a lived with not a day, yet 'is widder must 'ave missed, if it was only 'is langwidge in a rage, and yet a son by 'is fust wife, a reglar lamb as turned serous when 'prenticed to a bookseller, and took to preachin' over forty, thro' a-teachin' constant in their Sunday Schools, and married a party old enuff to be 'is mother, and gets a good screw out of them mishunaries, as is the best trade out Brown always says; and if one of 'em do chance to get eat by Savidges, Brown always will 'ave it as it's done to keep up the game—but then Brown ain't of a pious turn, tho' I'm sure Mr. Redgrave as keep a general shop, and didn't 'old with Christmas except for trade, and preached of a Sunday, did used to talk to 'im beautiful over a bit of 'ot supper, often twice a week, and I did think one time as Brown were a-goin' to take to chapel

'isself, thro' admirin' of that Redgrave, as werry nigh got money out of Brown, and nearly took me in too; not but wot I 'ad my doubts when I sent our gal for to change 'arf-a-suvrin, and he give 'er a duffin' florin and then wouldn't take it back, and 'is wife quite cheeky over it, a-sayin' as she wouldn't be gone at by me, as only told 'er about it, but, in course, I 'adn't no redress in law so wouldn't take the florin as she give me for it; leastways Brown said I 'adn't no right to it, and did ought to 'ave looked at my change when I took it; but I marked Mr. Redgrave, and says to myself, "You ain't a 'onest man," and true my words proved, for he was 'ad up for short waits and 'dulteratin' milk, and as to 'is chapel-goin' that were all a cloak, as the sayin' is, and jest to show off 'is preachin', as Brown did go to 'ear once, and when he come 'ome spoke out pretty plain, a-sayin' as it were rot and rubbish, so never went no more; and then come out a lot about Redgrave as wasn't no better be'aved in chapel than he was behind 'is counter, for he was playin' a false game at both, but were found out, tho' he was a deacon, as only shows as you didn't never ought to judge nobody by outside show, cos it's werry easy to turn up the whites of your eyes, as the sayin' is, and 'owl away at 'imms, and go in for long sermons, but to be really good is 'ard work, for flesh and blood as is only dust and hashes

after all's said and done. Not but wot I'm one as likes my church for all that; as to them as riddicules Christmas I always says as their 'arts ain't in the right place.

Not as I 'olds with parties as says the more mince pies as you eats the more years of 'appiness, for they're things as wants moderation, and only to be took with a thimblefull of sperrits, thro' bein' that rich, and as to eatin' of them cold, why I'd as lief eat bilin' lead.

But, in course, we was not a-goin' to spile our Christmas week over no ones wagaries, so when on Boxin'-day Mrs. Kilby couldn't get up to breakfust and covered 'er 'ead all over under the clothes when I went in to see 'er, I says to Liza, "If them's 'er games she'd best go back to 'er chawbakin' ways and lay a-bed and drink along with the pigs," as I smelt brandy orful strong when I went into the room, and if she 'adn't got a bottle of brandy in bed along with 'er.

Liza was that took aback at me findin' of it out, thro' 'avin' acted that 'onerable, and 'adn't never mentioned 'er mother-in-law bein' give to 'uggin' the cruet, as the sayin' is; as she were a-doin' the brandy bottle in bed, and let it slip out unawares with a 'oller crash, as showed as it were empty.

So I says to Liza, when we was got downstairs, "If there's a thing as I despises in this world,

it's any one as drinks on the sly, as is the wust sort of drunkards."

Liza didn't make no anser.

I 'adn't got the words out, when, turnin' my 'ead, who should I see but Mrs. Kilby, as 'ad got up and come down in her dishybille for a little 'ot water; as was all 'er depth, for she could 'ave give a call over the bannisters for it, but she wanted to 'ear wot I said when Liza come down and said as she weren't a-goin' to get up for a our or two, as must 'ave been out of bed like a bird, as the sayin' is, the moment as Liza left the room; and only went into 'er own for a minit, where the baby were asleep, so didn't wait not 'ardly a minit.

I see in a instant as old Mother Kilby's monkey were up, for she were pale as hashes, and says, with a quiverin' lip,

"No, indeed! you shan't 'ave your 'olliday spilte by me, as am a-goin' 'ome the moment as I'm dressed."

I says, "All right; it's the best thing as you can do if you're a-goin' to be that beastly disagreeable as you 'ave been."

She flounced out of the room, and were in a cab and off by train afore a 'our were over 'er 'ead.

Little did I think the trick as she played along with the eatables, as they didn't bring up, but left word as they was to be sent so as to be that fresh,

they was comin' up that werry day as Mrs. Kilby went 'ome, and if she didn't take and telegraft as they wasn't to come.

I wouldn't 'ave cared if she told me, a spiteful old beast, cos I'm thankful to say as I can buy as good a dinner as ever I cares to eat. Not but wot things fresh up from the country is no doubt better than a old London shopkeeper, and did used to 'ave a basket up myself once a fortnight, as were eggs and butter, with dairy-fed pork and poultry, only they would double my order, as come to more than we could get thro', so in course were tainted, partikler sossiges, as the gal wanted to eat, but I says, "Never under my roof, as might lurk in your constitution, and would bring on a somethink as would waste you away to a shadder;" the same as Melia Camper's sister, as swallered a somethink in a glass of water as dewoured 'er inside by the yard, and were within a inch of 'er witals, and only saved thro' tin filins' and soft soap, as she 'ad to swaller in pills.

Not but wot in my opinion 'er illness were all brought on thro' a-settin' on the damp grass so long one evenin', as she went with a party of friends to Bushey Park to spend the day, and wasn't never the same gal agin, as is the wust of young people a-gettin' out together, as will get a-rompin' and a-larkin', and then preaps cold water

or a suddin chill, as certingly settled on poor Melia, as never recovered the shock of bein' told wot really were the matter with 'er, as there wasn't no cure for, and took fly pison, as flew to the 'ead, and were ravin' for weeks in a straight weskit as brought 'er down to a shadder, and won't never be the 'arty young thing as she were afore.

Not as that 'ave got anythink to do with burglary, as I never did believe were 'ow poor Mrs. Preedy 'ad everythink took clean out of 'er pantry the Chrismas afore last; and felt that nervous, so that as Brown were not a-goin' to be at 'ome, I agreed as I'd spend last Christmas along with 'er, as is werry lonesome, poor soul; and Liza sent up a baskit as would stock a famly, so I didn't take nothink with me to Mrs. Preedy but a suckin'-pig, as is a thing she doats on, and a fine capon, with some sossiges, new-laid eggs, and butter.

Mrs. Preedy, she's got two parlours and the back-kitchen along with them Provers, as is a bad lot; and as to old Prover, he's that old glutton as would take a poor child's bread and butter, as the sayin' is, always a-graspin' at everythink.

When I got to Mrs. Preedy's Christmas Eve, I found 'er werry low; and not a-carin' to 'ave them Provers up to tea and supper, sent 'em down some mince pies as I'd made myself, and should 'ave give 'em 'arf the puddin' as I brought, at the werry least.

I'd biled it in my place over eight 'ours, and took and 'ung it up in Mrs. Preedy's kitchen, where she's got a 'angin' safe, thro' not a trustin' no more to the outside pantry.

Old Prover, he were that perlite, a-'elpin' to bring the things for me out of the cab; and I see 'is eye a-glistenin' at the sight of that suckin'-pig, as were a lily for whiteness, and looked like anythink in a quiet sleep.

I give old Prover the mince-pies and a pound of sossiges, well a-knowin' as they'd 'ave best part of that pig and poultry, too; for Mrs. Preedy, she's only one to pick, and as to me, tho' a good appetite, never goes in 'eavy for things as is over rich.

Mrs. Preedy, she 'adn't asked Prover and 'is wife to dinner, a-knowin' as they 'ad a married dorter and 'er 'usban' a-comin'; but we'd made up our mind as they should 'ave jest one 'arf of the suckin'-pig cold for supper.

Mrs. Preedy, she 'ave known better days, and 'ave got a brother as is reglar rollin' in riches, as the sayin' is. He'd sent 'er a Stilton cheese, and a 'amper, as was wine and sperrits mixed, not forgettin' of a fiver in a letter, as made 'er shed tears, thro' not 'avin' spoke for years, thro' a quarrel with 'is wife, as he'd jest berried, so were softened by sorrer.

Mrs. Preedy, she don't keep no servint, but

'ave a party as comes in every mornin' and evenin' to do for 'er, so when that woman 'ad gone 'ome with something to make 'er comfortable Christmas Eve, besides tea and sugar and the price of 'er coals, me and Mrs. Preedy made ourselves that snug over our tea, and 'ad a few stewed eels done plain, for our supper.

We'd locked all the things in the back kitchen, arter the chairwoman 'ad gone, and I'd got the key on the mantel-piece.

Them parlours is nice rooms, and in the back, as is Mrs. Preedy's bed-room, a noble four-poster, as would hold four easy.

It was coldish weather, so we didn't 'ave no fire in the bed-room, but got ready in the settin'-room, all but washin' my face and 'ands, and when we went to bed left the door atween the rooms open, so as to feel the fire.

I never didn't fancy them Provers myself, as never did show Mrs. Preedy no attenshuns, tho' they was distant related some'ow, tho' they was werry carneyin' in their ways, and both on 'em come in to 'ave a glass afore goin' to bed.

Mrs. Preedy, she ain't a 'eavy sleeper, leastways she says as she ain't, but she makes up for it in snores, as is like a wild bore close agin your bed, so sleep I couldn't.

I 'adn't never took 'arf a bed with 'er afore,

so didn't know 'er 'abits, or she wouldn't never 'ave ketched me a-sharin' of 'er downy couch, as she called it.

Well, sleep I couldn't, escept by fits and starts, but she snored enuf for both.

I was just a-droppin' off, when I 'eard a-somethin' fall.

I says to myself, "That's in the back kitchen, and sounds like that 'angin' safe give way."

"Law!" I says, "pre'aps it's thieves at the wittles," so I gets out of bed, a-throwin' on my warm shawl, and my carpet slippers, goes out in the passage, a-treadin' quite gentle, and no light, tho' I'd got the 'oly shovel to purtect me, as the woman 'ad brought up coals in, and left in the fender.

When I got to the top of the kitchen stairs, I 'eard someone movin', and says, "Who's there?"

"Oh! Mrs. Brown, is that you?" says Mrs. Prover's woice, on the stairs; "I'm so dreadful frightened; I thinks it's thieves, and Prover out," and upstairs she runs.

I says, "There's a light in Mrs. Preedy's kitchen, as must be thieves."

"Don't go down," says Mrs. Prover, a-ketchin' 'old of me, "they'll murder you."

I says, "Rubbish! stand out of the way," so

pushed 'er away as she tried to 'old me, and down the stairs I slipped, into that back-kitchen, just in time to 'ave the door shet in my face, and the light blowed out.

I give one drive at the door, as sent it flyin' open, cos the lock 'ad been tampered with, and wouldn't ketch, and see a man a-gettin' out of the winder.

He was just 'arf way out, as I got up to it, and shet it down that sharp on 'is back, so as to shet 'im 'arf out and 'arf in, and didn't I lay into 'im with that 'oly shovel, I spanked 'im to 'is 'art's content, as the sayin' is, afore Mrs. Prover could rush in, on 'earin' 'is yells, and says, "For mussy's sake, don't murder 'im, it's Prover."

And so it were, when I says, "Why, I thought you was out," as said as he'd only come down 'earin' a noise, and ketched a chap a-riflin' the safe.

I was put out makin' sich a mistake, and were a-goin' for to say as I were that sorry when I 'eard woices in the back yard as proved to be the perlice as 'ad collard the thief with the property, and was a-callin' down the airey.

So I says, "'Old 'im tight till I comes."

"Oh!" says Mrs. Prover, "let 'im go, pre'aps it's starvation as 'ave drove 'im to it, we did ought to be merciful."

I says, "I'll go and 'ave a look at 'im."

Says Prover, "I'll go and give 'im in charge."

I says, "Come on, we'll go together."

So up we goes, Prover a-limpin', thro' still a-feelin' the effects of the shovel, and when we opened the back door, there stood two perlice and a man, as they'd cort with the suckin'-pig, as they said they'd see another man 'and up to 'im out of the back kitchen, and if they 'adn't got my plum-puddin' in the airey.

I says to the feller, "Who are you?"

He says, "Ask 'im," a-pintin' to Prover.

I never see a man more took a-back, and as to Mrs. Prover, she took and stole away like a fox; and who should that man prove to be but Prover's son-in-law, as the perlice would 'ave took and locked up, if I'd 'ave pressed the charge, but I couldn't a-bear the idea of any one bein' locked up Christmas day, jest for tryin' to steal a bit of wittles as were all a plan of Old Prover's.

So the perlice was squared, as it were all right. I says, "I'll speak to Mrs. Preedy about it."

They said "Oh! pray don't." I didn't say nothink, but jest went and see the kitchen winders shet up, and put the things back in the safe and went back to bed.

But Mrs. Preedy she was that dreadful frightened at bein' woke up, that nothink as I could do wouldn't pacify 'er, and as soon as the woman came in the

mornin' 'ad to send 'er for a cab, and take poor Mrs. Preedy to my place, along with all the wittles, and drink, and tho' I 'ad give our gal a three days' 'olliday, thro' that woman of Mrs. Preedy's bein' able to stop and 'elp, I soon got the place all right and comfortable, with a good dinner on the table by two o'clock, and as luck would 'ave it, Brown come home quite unexpected, jest in time, and who should look in but Miss Pilkinton, as were a-goin' to dine with 'er brother, but 'ad 'ad words the night afore with 'is wife, and come on the chance of findin' me at 'ome. So we 'ad a jolly dinner, and if ever there was a lovely bowl of punch brewed in this world, it were the one as Brown made that day, as we drank to all friends, a Merry Christmas and 'Appy New Year.

But as I were a-sayin', I must say as I were took a-back when Brown come in one evenin' a-sayin' as they'd been and fished it up."

I says, "Wot is it."

"Oh!" he says, "that there blessed needle's been found."

"Wot," I says, "out of the oshun deep."

"Well," I says, "I am glad as it ain't been left a-stickin' in the bottom of the sea, as might 'ave run into a wessel, or some one a-bathin' might 'ave took a-'eader out of a boat, and come a reglar cropper in collusion with it, as would knock a 'ole

in anythink, and run into the British fleet a-ridin' at anker, as would make them Rooshuns jeer and cheer, and the Merrykin eagle crow over us;" but, I says, "'owever did they get it up."

"Oh!" says Brown, "it were the true British tar as done it, tho' he says I'm sorry to 'ear as life 'ave been lost over it."

"Law," I says, when he'd took and read to me about it, "why ever didn't they leave the beastly thing behind, as won't be no use to nobody, and ain't no ornyment, not when you comes to put 'uman life agin it."

"Well," says Brown, "they 'ave found it, and means to wait till fine weather for to bring it over."

I says, "I don't seem to care about it."

"Oh!" says Miss Pilkinton as 'ad jest come in, "I must say as I rejoices as it's safe."

"Why," I says, "it was safe for that matter at the bottom of the sea, as Brown says were down too deep to do any 'arm."

"Oh!" says Miss Pilkinton, "but think of the light as it may throw on things, as perhaps some of them Irygliphics might be 'rote by Moses 'isself."

"Law bless you," I says, "you don't think as the Jews would 'ave left it behind, if it 'ad been, besides I says, Clearpatrer weren't no 'Ebrew."

"Well," she says, "it may be a Moerbite stone, and 'ave all the 'istory of the world rote on it."

"Ah!" I says, "that may do for some green-horns to swaller."

Says Miss Pilkinton, "I'm sure as our minister will make all out, and will preach about it."

"No doubt," I says, "the same as Dr. Cummin as says it's a fore-runner of the battle of Army-gidden."

She says, "I don't 'old with Dr. Cummin."

So I says, "All right," as put up 'er back frightful, for she's got 'er 'ead full of religion, jest now, and 'ave led me sich life over all them goin's on at them churches, as says to 'er myself, let every one do as they pleases, and don't be a bullyin' them as don't agree with you, cos you wont never drive nobody, tho' you may lead 'em, cos that's 'er way to be down upon every one, the same as she was on the Prince of Wales, when a teatotaler, for dinin' along with the Licenced Wittlers last year.

"Not dine with the Licenced Wittlers indeed," I says, "and why ever not, tho' he is Prince of Wales, as is only flesh and blood, arter all, and must 'ave wittles and drink like the rest on us, and in course we didn't ought to indulge in either, without a-checkin' of ourselves, as is the reason as all wittlers didn't ought to be unlicenced, as else would be makin' beasts of theirselves constant, as the sayin' is; and as to them total abstainers, 'owever they keeps body and soul together I can't think, as

is wuss than wegetariums, like Mrs. Brister as lives up agin St. Pancrust, and belongs to a chapel as says meat's a delusion, and alkerol the devil, and as none of the elect don't never touch neither."

So I says to 'er, "My good soul, don't be so ridiclus, don't. Do you think as arter all these years, as the world 'ave been a-standin', a-goin' rong, as you says, you and your minister is a-goin' to set us all right; and as to not a-eatin' meat, why, whatever would become of the butchers and the farmers, with the sheep and oxen a-eatin' of their 'eads off, to say nothink of pigs and poultry; and I should like to know 'ow parties is to get up their strength arter a illness, if there wasn't no mutton chops to be 'ad, nor yet a roast chicken for a change. I quite agrees as there's a-many as eats theirselves to death, partikler them as won't take no stimylints, as in my opinion, good eatin' deserves good drinkin', as the sayin' is, but none of your nasty gorgin' swillin' ways for me, as likes everythink in the moderate line.

But as I were a-sayin', them wittlers 'as a right to 'ave anybody to dinner as they likes, and as to temperance and teatotalers, they be blowed, and all the old womin as sets a-gabblin' over it, and I knowed one old scrag as I met in a train, as 'ad the impidence for to correct me over my little flat bottle, as I took out thro' feelin' as the spavins were

a-lurkin' in my constitution, and jest wanted to nip 'em in the bug, as the sayin' is, cos as we all knows a stitch in time saves nine, and I felt a sharp one in my side, so jest took a drain on the quiet, and jest as I were a-liftin' of it to my lips, with my 'ankercher round it, if this old cat as looked like dry parchmint, didn't say to me,

"Ah! if you would but jine our glorious leeg."

I says, "Who's he?"

She says, "Oh!" she says, "a glorious band as marched twelve thousan strong thro' the streets, and was all sex and sizes, from Archbishop Mannin' to 'Arper Twelvetrees."

I says, "I don't care a fardin' for no bishops, nor yet archbishops, they ain't a-goin' to stop my licker, as I've said over and over agin, if a bishop or a archbishop can't take a glass with a friend without a-gettin' under the table, then," I says, "it's 'igh time for 'im to promise 'is good lady as he'll pull up in time, cos it ain't becomin' the cloth, and I knowed a party once as always give 'is word to 'is wife as he'd stop drinkin' when he felt as he couldn't say, Croky at Christmas, quite clear, and he was a archdeekin. Cos I well remember a old doctor as 'ad what they did used to call a chapel of ease, somewheres over the water, as finished 'is two bottles whenever he could get 'em, as wore welwet shoes as was gashed, and 'ad chalk bones

as come out of 'is jintes, with a nose like a mulberry, and never 'eld up 'is 'ead agin arter the Catherlics was mancipated, as he said were a blow at 'is constitution as he never couldn't stand agin.

I well remember 'is last illness, as were eighty-seven, and 'ad real turtle and lime punch 'arf a 'our before he died, and throwed a piller at a pious lady's 'ead, as come in, and offered to read to 'im.

But that were the end of them good old parsins as kep up Church and State, and couldn't a-bear no Metherdists, nor nothink like that, and turned away 'is cook for bein' dipped by the Baptists, as no doubt wanted licker in some shape, poor thing, thro' a-standin' over the fire that constant. But as I says whyever not let other parties' religions alone.

Now as Miss Pilkinton 'ave took and turned Rityerlist, I am reglar took aback at things as she says, for she's more down on the Catherlics than ever, and says as 'er minister is the only Pope as she's a-goin' to obey, and if they puts down west-ments, she's a-goin' over to the Sweedinborgiums jest to spite the bishops, as in course they'll take it to 'art, poor old gentlemen, as must be worreted to death; and if it wasn't as they must live would take and cut it altogether, only in course it won't do for them all to retire, like them Colonials, as I well remembers one on 'em, many years ago, ah!

more than thirty-five, or thereabouts, as went out a-talkin' quite cheerful about bein' eat up by them savidges, as was very partial to misshunaries, partikler when fat, and 'ad eat up one with 'is nuss and baby. Well, that there bishop he were a-talkin' werry big about a-goin' to die a-convertin' these poor denuded creeturs; but, law bless you, he weren't sich a fool as to waste 'is life out there, for he got 'isself what they calls translated, and I see 'im myself a-settin in the 'Ouse of Lords cheek by jole, as the sayin' is, with them others, as is all red 'ot to go and conwert them 'eathen, only they knows as they're doin' better in stoppin' at 'ome, a-workin' 'ard among the 'eathens in London, as you may count by the tens of thousins any fine Sunday mornin' as you takes a walk in church time.

I remembers about that there colonial bishop so well, cos 'im and 'is good lady come and stopped along with Lady Wittles, jest afore I married, and everybody was a-talkin' about the noble sacrifice as he were a-makin' in goin' out there for to be eat up, as he were quite a-lookin' for'ard to, and so were 'is good lady, and must both feel cut up dreadful to find theirselves back again in Ingland, with a pallis to live in, and five thousin a year, as is wot Brown calls the loaves and fishes, but then he is always terrible down on them parsons, as I always says let 'em alone, poor things, as must get a livin' somehow.

But as to Miss Pilkinton, she goes on so about the Pope, and calls 'im a 'umbug, for not a-lettin' of the clergy 'ave wives, as she considers a orful sin, as no doubt all the young ladies considers werry rong.

Not but wot some of them Rityeralists don't 'old with parsons a-marryin', tho' I did know a parson as took and preached a sermon agin matrimony that wiolent as all the young ladies was in 'issterics all over the church, as in course he didn't mean; so for to make it up he took and engaged 'isself to one on 'em that werry evenin', a walkin' round 'er father's garden arter tea; and why not, for I'm sure werry often a parson's wife is a deal more use than a parson; and as to the bishops, I knowed one myself, as my own aunt lived 'ousmaid to, as daren't call 'is soul 'is own, as the sayin' is, without 'is wife's leave, as were a reglar terror to them curits, and gave all the clergy their orders, as were more than the bishop could do, tho' he did get thousins upon thousins a year, and two pallises for a-pretendin' to do it.

But I do believe as Miss Pilkinton is a-goin' to set up a church of 'er own, leastways 'er and some other old womin, as is a-goin' to cut the Pope out altogether; so he'd better look out for 'isself, cos Miss Pilkinton is a-goin' to be the true Church, jest the same as the Primytiff Methodists, as I knowed

a party as belonged to, as couldn't a-bear the Partikler Baptists, and ended in jinin' the Lack-a-day Saints, as allows a man to 'ave as many wives as he pleases, as would be a fust-rate church for to set up in London, and I wonders as some one don't start it, tho' in course Queen Wictorier wouldn't be the 'ead on it, cos she's like me, and don't 'old with sich ways, as I considers such parties 'ussies, Church or no Church, and all werry well for Merrykins in their backwoods, but ain't ways as we should put up with, not even in St. John's Wood, as I considers a out-of-the-way place, tho' pretty 'ouses, and constant buses at your werry door, to say nothink of bein' able to get up there on the quiet by the Underground, as is the best way for them as goes about their own busyness, and don't want no 'gossipin' parties to be a-watchin' 'em, tho' some dashes up in their male phætons and some goes in 'Ansom cabs, as always looks conspicurous, I think partikler in a female, as is better suited for a growler.

It's all werry fine and convenient, no doubt, for to be able to ride in a bus from 'Oxton to Chelsea for sixpence, as is a long pull for the 'orses any 'ow, as there's many feelin' 'arts pities; but wotever do parties think about the driver and the conductor, as is, some on 'em, out for sixteen 'ours for a day's work, for seven days a week, and then they talks

about slavery bein' abolished; why, there's many a busman as 'ave got a wife and family as he don't know nothink about, except a-'earin' as they're born, or preaps a-gettin' a 'ollyday of a Sunday arternoon, for a 'ollyday jest to foller one on 'em to the grave, as is 'ard lines for a parint as is flesh and blood the same as them as rides in a coach and four, tho' only a bus driver, as 'as to face all weathers, but feels it most when drivin' north-east I've 'eard say, poor fellows; but ain't such fools as to strike, cos they knows as that is like a-cuttin' off your nose to be revenged on your face, as the sayin' is, cos there's lots of coachmen out of place, and footmen too, as would jump at an omnibus like a cock at a gooseberry, as the sayin' is; and when you're once off a bus it ain't so easy to get on agin, as won't 'ardly pull up for a passenger, and makes you walk up to your ancles in the middle of the street, and then takes and bundles you in like a old clothes bag, all of a 'eap, a-pitchin' into parties' laps, as shoves you nearly backards.

But as I were a-sayin' why ever shouldn't the Prince of Wales dine along with them Licenced Wittlers, as in course never dines with any one as he's ashamed on, tho' in course there's parties as would go down on their bended knees, if he'd come and dine along with them; so as they might crow over their friends, and come the bounce, as in course

aint never real ladies, and gentlemen, but only wot the Merrykins calls shoddy; and I must say as I 'ave dined along with Licenced Wittlers myself, tho' in course, I ain't Prince of Wales, as no doubt were treated that respectful, and went in at the jug and bottle entrance, and not passin' the bar where in general there's a crowd round of all sects and sizes, a-idlin' of their time, the same as a-lunchin' bar, as is where young Kennit picked up 'is wife, a nice bilin' of greens she turned out, and left 'im with a child three months old, a-wile 'ussey, as I'd send sich to prisin like a drab of a thing as ticed young Evertight into a marriage as were a gentleman's son, and died ravin' mad with drink, when the child were three weeks old; as that wretch took and starved to death, and said she were glad as it were dead, and went about in 'er widder's weeds all painted up and 'er 'air done yaller; but it come 'ome to 'er, for she were took up for swindlin' and got two years for false pretences, as she swindled respectable tradesmen with, and got six months extra for biggermy, as she gloried in; but will come to beg 'er bread afore she dies, and serve 'er right, a wretch, cos I see her myself that bloatered a-comin' out of a public, as jeered at me in passin', and told another fieldmale as were along with 'er, 'ow I were a reglar old sucker as would drink the oshun dry in 'arf quarterns.

In course I didn't take no notice on 'er, tho' I knowed 'er 'arf-sister well, as were a respectable 'ard-workin' woman, and the right sort, and lived in one place over seventeen year, and I do think the plainest face and figger as ever I set eyes on, and knowed it too, so wouldn't marry Grounds the baker, as 'ad berried two wives, and only wanted 'er savin' as were over fourteen 'undered pound, includin' of a legacy as were a thousan' as 'er missus left 'er, as she'd nussed for twelve year, as she never left 'er bed, and were eighty-five, as is a good age, and if it 'adn't been for Brown, would 'ave been swindled out of every farden, and the lease of the 'ouse as she 'ad done up, and took lodgers as was invalid ladies, and never 'ad a room wacant for over fifteen year, and then retired, as 'ave got a cottage at Omerton, and over two 'undred a year for life, as she got thro' a-sinkin' of 'er principles for to get, and jined the Baptists, but is 'ighly respected and a-goin' over to see 'er own sister no more, tho' she is a-cuttin' a dash in Camdin Town, with that bow-legged fiddler, as it is well known is a married man, and both turned out of a train, rollin' in licker on Boxin' day by the York and Albany, as is a part I do not like myself thro' bein' that confusion so many roads, a-meetin' with trams and busses a-runnin' you up and down in all directions; and of all the 'ard things to stop it's them trams as takes

such a time to steady theirselves, and seems to kick like, and nearly sent me a-sprawlin' full length on that fieldmale's lap, as 'ollers out, "Conductor, turn this old walrus out, she's that disgustin' intosticated, as I wont set in the place with 'er, and 'ave werry nigh smashed my good gentleman's violin, as I were a-'oldin' for 'im on my knee."

Well, parties was disgusted at 'er as spoke as thick as treacle 'erself, and as to 'im he couldn't keep 'is body up, but were a-pitchin' forard. So a gentleman up and spoke for me, and says to 'er, "You're a nice one to talk about drink, why, you're reelin' yourself, and so is your pall." If she didn't take and fly at 'im like a tiger cat, and the feller as were with 'er, he got up and says, "He'd 'ave any one's life as dared to insult 'is wife."

There was a nice row got up in a instant, so the conductor he stopped the car, and 'ad them two out in a instant, and they was left a-rollin' about, like the oshun waves. That conductor he were a-goin' to 'ave me out too, but parties took and spoke up for me, and I says, "He'll 'ave to carry me out, that's all I can say, and as to licker, why, I ain't even 'ad a noonins, tho' it is Christmas-time."

Says the conductor, "Well, you come in a-staggerin'."

I says, "And so would Queen Wictorier 'erself, thro' this 'ere car a-wobblin' about, and joltin' so

in stoppin', not but wot I'm used to 'em, thro' Merryker, where they runs from one end of the place to the other, night and day, only you didn't never ought to 'ave a decent gownd on, nor nothink nice for a slip, for I never did see sich people for spittin' afore they looks, not as they cares a blow about anybody else's feet, nor shoes and stockin's. Mrs. Pinchin she were dreadful put out cos of the Prince a-dinin' with the Licenced Wittlers, as she said were a blow at the cause of temperance all over the world.

So I says, "Rubbish, why, you don't suppose as the Prince would drink a drop more, cos the Licenced Wittlers stood treat, as knows 'isself too well for to touch a drop too much, wittlers or no wittlers, cos in course he can get anythink as he likes, and as much on it as he can carry any day, and not like parties as only gets a chance of a feed now and then, so 'as a reglar go in, the same as the workus on Christmas Day, poor things."

But wotever, I want to know is, whyever the Prince of Wales ain't to do as he likes, jest the same as anyone else, and not to be bullied and treated like a child, and to be told as you sha'nt 'ave a drop of beer arter certin 'ours of a Sunday, and some wants to shet up all the pubs everywhere all day Sunday; and all as I say is, if Parlymint tries any of them dodges, we'll take and put Parly-

mint down, and 'ave Queen Wictorier to rain over us without no Parlymint, as is all jaw and 'umbug.

Cos in course, Parlymint don't care who's a-famishin' for a drop of beer, but Queen Wictorier, thro' 'avin' been a mother 'erself, does, and loves 'er people, and if she was to say to 'em, "Dearly beloved," like a parsin, "I'll open all the pubs, night and day, only you must promise me not to get screwed," I do believe as they'd all promise, and wow, and, wot's more, keep their words, which is a deal more than Parlymint ever does, as promises all manner afore they gets in at a election, but don't care a blow for you when once they've took their seats.

In course, Queen Wictorier would give very strick orders to the perlice to bring any one afore 'er as they found intosticated, and she'd take and order 'em a good round dozen on the spot, as would sober 'em pretty sharp.

But as to Parlymint, I've lived a good many years in the world, and 'ave 'eard a deal about Parlymint doin' this, and Parlymint a-doin' tother; but it seems to me as there's jest as many wrong things a-goin' on as ever, as Parlymint don't set right, but all as I knows is, if Parlymint shets up the pubs of a Sunday, and we submits to it, then we did ought to change our religion, and never sing no more about Brittins never shall be slaves.

Cos we shall be wuss than negro blacks. Not as I'd 'ave publics opin all 'ours, for parties to be a-settin' and a-swillin' in, not but I do say as up to twelve o'clock, any one did ought to be able to get a drop of drink in town or country; and then the ideer of turnin' respectable parties out of a 'otel where they're a-'avin' of a bit of supper, and enjoyin' theirselves, cos if it is rong to be a-doin' so, why ain't it rong for them swells to be givin' balls and supper, a-turnin' night into day. Cos if it's rong in a public-'ouse, it can't be right in a private one, as disturbs the neybours quite as much, one as the other; for I'm sure sometimes at Mrs. Padwick's, there ain't no gettin' a wink of sleep for 'earin' of them corny-a-pistins bein' blowed thro', and callin' the carridges up as stops the way, for parties as 'ave been a-dancin' all night, as I knows is the way as the swells gets their dorters pardners for life, as they calls it, as ain't the way as I considers you did ought to look arter a wife, cos I'm sure there were Ann Mellon, as took and married a young man out of a dancin' cadermy, as turned out a thief, as reglar lived by it, and didn't deny it, and took 'is punishment quite calm, as he only considered it a misfortin in bisyness, the same as failin', as he said always did 'appen in wotever line you might be. He was a impident waggerbone, and reglar cheeked the judge and jury too. But as to 'er,

wotever could she espect, as were a reglar double-face mask of 'ippocrissy, and took in 'er father, as were one of them mad Bethlemites, and belonged to a chapel, as the minister on were a deal more down on you, than ever any Pope could be, a-sayin' as there wasn't no 'opes for any one as ever touched a card, or went into a theayter; and tho' I don't 'old with them card-sharpin' parties, as is wot Ann Mellon's 'usban were, yet a 'and at cards over cribbage, or all fours, as is a noble game, I can't see no 'arm in it myself; but as to that feller, he'd 'ave cheated 'is own father, as I never knowed 'is name, for he'd as many alayasses as a donkey-driver. Well, that double-faced gal, when quite a child, did used to play a round game at a neybour's, unbeknown to 'er father, as a nice round game it were, with 'ands too much under the table for me, as I cort 'em a-passin' the cards to one another, as is no better than cheatin.' She was that wild as she growed up, and as for goin' to the play and music 'alls on the sly, she were up to that game three nights a week, with 'er father gone to bed twixt eight and nine, and she'd leave off work at eight, and go 'ome, and say, "Good night, father," at 'is bed-room door, and then go and dress 'erself out, and slip out at the back door, as she left on the latch all night, and went and got married all of a 'urry at a registry office; and with 'im run in afore

a month were out, for stealin' a lady's dressin' bag out of 'er broom, at a shop door, dressed up like a footman, and werry nigh got off, thro' a-pretendin' he 'ad mistook the carridge, only a detective as were passin' knowed 'im.

He only got six months, and were out agin jest as she were downstairs with 'er fust, as was twins, but never got thro' their teeth, poor little dears, as was both cristened by a Irish chairwoman as 'ad come in for 'arf days to the parlors, and went upstairs a-'earin' them poor dears a-fightin' for their breath, in strong convulsions, and only a bit of a gal for to mind 'em, thro' the mother bein' gone off to Rosherwille, and 'im nabbed agin at the station, thro' a gentleman's watch, as were in licker, and both dead when she got 'ome, and as to 'er shrieks they was nothink but licker in my opinion, as let out as it were shampain, as no doubt some of 'is pals stood treat on 'im a gettin' out, as must 'ave been aggrawatin' to find 'isself so soon collared agin, and never to see 'is children, as was 'is offsprings arter all, tho' he was a thief, but better off than 'is broughtins up could 'ave made 'em. Not but wot he were werry much put out at that there Irish party a-cristenin' of them, as he said were a-interferin' with their liberties of conshences, as shows as he did care about no religion, as is wot I likes to see in a parient myself.

But as to Licenced Wittlers a-'oldin' out a temptation to wice, why, it is well beknown as the werry wust places is sometimes coffee-shops, as ain't got no licence at all, as tea and coffee is only a blind to any games as may be a-goin' on, as is gamblin', and 'ave been known to 'ave cock fightin' in the back premises.

But wot I complains on, is a orderly 'ouse bein' shet up by ten o'clock, as was walkin' by one myself out by 'Ammersmith Bridge, as were the fust suspenshun as ever were 'ung out, and couldn't get a drop of beer, tho' we'd walked all the way from this side Mortlake, with the wind that unpleasant a-blowin' up the dust in your face, and makin' you as dry as a lime basket, as the sayin' is, and me not bein' a figger for walkin', partikler now as I'm a-gettin' on, as I considers, past sixty to be, tho' you may wear well, and in course, a front do make a difference, thro' grey 'air bein' a sign of the flight of time, as the sayin' is, not as they're anythink to the flights of stairs at that Baker Street Station, with all that sulferry coal down your throat, till I never 'oped as I should get my breath agin, and then to 'urry across the road jest in time to find that pub at the corner shet up as tight as wax, as the sayin' is; and you might thump at the door till you dropped, tho' the gas weren't even turned down, as showed over the skylights; and it's a

mussy as we can afford to 'ave both beer and sperrits in the 'ouse, or must 'ave gone to bed parched, and as to temptin' any one to drink, why if we'd been inclined for to stick to it, there was more than enuff to tosticate a dozen or two, tho' we was only seven, cos in course, we asked the two parties in, as was almost strangers, thro' knowin' as they couldn't get drop nor sup, as the sayin' is, thro' bein' single men and in lodgins, as said they 'ad bottle beer in, but no tumblers left out.

I don't fancy a-drinkin' out of my tooth mug myself, even tho' the water is sweet and 'olesome.

No, I says, give plenty licences for drink, but look out as it's 'onest drink, and no cocklus indycuss, nor pison like that, put in the beer; as I well remembers Mrs. Turner, as did used to 'elp wash with my dear mother, and were a publickin's widder, as often told me as she were ruined by a excise man as come in sudden, and ketched 'er 'usban in the cellar a-puttin' grains of Parrydise in the beer, jest to give it strength and a nice taste, as lost their licence, and Turner fell down in a fit that werry day as the brokers was put in the place, and died ravin' mad on the pauper side of the county lunytics, as were thirty years older than 'er, thro' 'avin' been the barmaid, as she said, but I 'ave 'eard say as she were nothink better than only the pot gal, and certingly I do remember 'er

a-cleanin' a private pewter as father did used to 'ave 'is supper beer out on, and made it shine like bran new with silver sand, as is a fine thing for pewter, but wouldn't suit silver, as there ain't nothink so good for as fine whitin', as won't scratch put on with water, and then worked off with a soft brush, cos wash leather is apt for to sweat the plate, as I've 'eard say Jews will come round with, and give a new leather for a old 'un, as they takes and melts in a furniss, and can get the silver out on as 'ave been rubbed off in cleanin'.

In course, a excise man may be a tyrant, jest the same as a perliceman, or the beadle, but if parties wasn't a-doin' rong they wouldn't 'ave no call to be a-fear'd of them, nor any one else, as is put over 'em, tho' in course, a beadle may be in herror, and even a perliceman may go rong; the same as Sam Mason, as were a-takin' care of a empty 'ouse, with 'is wife, and went down the rong airey steps, as were three doors off, jest as the cook and 'ousemaid was a-settin' down to supper, thro' the family bein' away, and walked straight into the kitchen, as was took by surprise at first, but found as they was old friends, 'avin' been in service together, and certinly Sam were werry good-lookin' and pleasant company, so sat and 'ad a chat, friendly like, about old times, as wasn't no reason why 'is wife should come and shy a pavin' stone at the kitchen

winder, and swear as she cort 'im a-kissin' the 'ousemaid while the cook were gone to draw a drop more beer, as 'ad been a-watchin' 'em thro' a 'ole in the blind, thro' the potboy as told 'er he'd see 'er 'usban go rong down them steps; as made 'er come to look arter 'im, so broke the winder thro' the door bein' locked, as he never 'eard 'er try, thro' bein' so took up a-larfin' and talkin' over 'is supper, tho' as steady a man and a good 'usban as ever trod shoe leather, as the sayin' is, and that cook is fust cousin by the mother's side, as 'adn't met since a mere boy, as in course were foolish in 'im not to step in and tell 'is wife, and then there wouldn't 'ave been nothink unpleasant, for both that cook and 'ousemaid got the sack, as the sayin' is, without characters, thro' the master a-comin' 'ome that werry night, with the latch key quite unespected, jest as the winder were broke, as brought the perlice from two beats off; and as to poor Sam, he were dismissed the force, and went to sea agin, and never come back, as he said he never would, and there she was left with two, all thro' jealousy, without no grounds; and tho' she did git a livin' thro' charitable ladies as set 'er dorter up in a sewin' macheen, yet she always fretted arter Mason, as in my opinion couldn't never 'ave cared a fardin' for 'er, or he'd 'ave never stopped away all these years, unless he were drownded, and then in

course he couldn't come 'ome again, and never will in this world.

I must say as it's a dreadful thing to 'ave a 'usban as you can't trust, but I'm sure I don't speak feelin', for if Brown were to go out to supper and stop away fifty years, I know as he come back and tell me wot 'ad kep 'im so long, and I should believe every word jest the same as if he kissed the book over it; cos he's a man as 'is word is like 'is blow, it comes fust, as the sayin' is, leastways, always 'ave done with me; speak as you find, is my motter, all the world over.

But there's Mrs. Mullins and 'er 'usban, as is jest like two twin red 'errin's, thro' bein' that dried up, she says to me, "Mrs. Brown, 'owever you can find it in your conscience to run down teatotalers the same as you do, puzzles me, considerin' the good as they've done."

"Yes," I says, "they may 'ave done good to certin inderwidrels as 'ave been given to drink, and let them take as many pledges, as Mr. Attinburer, as is all over the place in that line; but don't let 'em say as everybody did ought to do the same, cos as," I says, "if you can't walk without a crutch, 'ave one, but don't try to force them as can walk alone to take to 'em, as is superflerous."

Mrs. Mullins she says as their minister says as alkerole is the work of the devil, and nobody

as 'opes to be saved didn't never ought to touch it."

"Then," I says. "your minister is a ass, and somethink wuss, as ain't never read 'is Bible, so don't you go a-follerin' parties as wants to make out as they're a deal wiser than 'Oly Scripture; and, in my opinion, no good Christshun can't never speak agin wine, and I don't believe as any does but them low ranters or parties like, as seems to think as poor people is downright fools, and did ought to be kep' under like the 'sylum for idiots."

In course there ain't no denyin' as 'arf quarterns is inticin' things, but then so is a bottle, as parties will put their lips to constant, and fancy all the time as they ain't took none when they've 'ad a good swig; and do that every now and then, a-standin' over your ironin' of a 'ot afternoon, and see wot you'll be by tea-time, as were wot drove Childers away from 'is 'ome, a-comin' 'ome to 'is tea, and findin' 'er on the bed as drunk as Cloey, as the sayin' is.

Not as the Cloey I knowed were one to drink, leastways, Old Cloey, as he were called, thro' bein' a 'Ebrer Jew, and a good creetur as ever lived; and wouldn't never touch a bit of cold pie for fear of lard in the crust, cos the 'igh priest 'ad 'is eye on 'im pretty thick, thro' bein' 'elped by sinningog, as 'is the Jew's religion of a Friday evenin', and

wore 'is 'at, leastways, a cap all Saturday, as is their Sunday.

But as I were a-sayin', Childers he were a decent man till he took up with the teatotalers that wiolent, as he drove 'is wife to drinkin' on the sly, cos she durstn't be seen a-goin' in for 'arf a quartern, nor yet 'arf a pint, so got the old woman at the apple stall to fetch 'er a bottle on the quiet, as she got a-'uggin' that frequent, as she soon 'ad to pawn 'er things to get more; but Childers he cured 'er, for when she got sober he took and give 'er sich a 'idin' as made 'er yell agin for mussy, and give 'er sich a fright as she run away to 'er mother, as made 'er go back to 'er 'usban. So he took 'er away into the country to some relations, as was total abstainers, so not a drop of beer even passed 'er lips, and arter that 'er little gal were born, and so they sent for Childers, as come and made it up, and took and moved to a new 'ouse, and both gave way a little, and met 'arf way, for he give up teatotalism, and she give up sperrits, and now she's the mother of five, as she nussed like a true mother, and as sober as a judge, tho' fond of 'er beer, as in general prefers cooper; tho', for my part, I sticks to my 'arf-and-'arf, thro' a-dealin' at a respectable 'ouse where they don't play no tricks with pison in their licker, nor yet water it down to the ground, as I considers a-doin' as you'd be done by; for I do say as a

publickin as ain't no call to be a sinner in the dulteration line is as good as a father to you, cos it's 'arf the battle to 'ave 'olesome wittles and drink; as I've knowed many a child as 'ave throve in bein' brort up by 'and, all owin' to a dairyman as did 'is dooty in keepin' of 'is milk from the pump, as is wot a many publickins tries to do on the quiet, with kyan pepper throwed in to make it fiery, and that's wot brings the excise down on them that sharp as 'ave shet 'em up in a crump, as the sayin' is.

And then jest look at porter, as is a real blessin' to mothers, as ain't made up with no lickeriss, nor yet treacle, nor yet salt, for to make parties feel that thirsty as one pint brings on another, partikler with them as likes jest a dash of sperrits in it, as I don't 'old with, escept when you're that 'ot as cold beer might strike to you with a chill, as is a bad thing, and some takes a little ginger and sugar, as is best in winter when jest warmed.

But if ever there was a large 'arted man, with a wife to match, it were Mr. Bimber, as 'ad a fine 'ouse on the North Road and ornary of a Sunday, as nobility 'ave been knowed to drop in at, with a fillet of weal and a 'am, as made your mouth water, with lovely meat pies, with a quarter of lamb and roast ducks, with the loveliest summer cabbidges and peas, with new potatoes and collyflowers, with fruit tarts and custid puddin's, and bread and

cheese, and sich lovely fresh salid, and all for two shillin's. In course, parties as dined there took their licker pretty free, notwithstandin' ale, or 'arf and 'arf at dinner, cos good eatin' deserves good drinkin', as the sayin' is; but then, in course, that ain't no reason as parties should take and make beasts of theirselves; not as beasts, as a rule, ever does take and gorge theirselves, tho' they are eatin' all day long, tho' I 'ave 'eard as pigs will make too free with grains, and cows bust theirselves in a clover field, but then they don't know no better.

I must say as I likes a reglar old-fashioned public, with a parlour behind the bar, as I remembers one down near where old Chelsea Church stands, as my grandfather remembered well a little willage, and can remember that old church when I were a gal, with a old parson and clerk a-talkin' to one another all the time over the Salms, as never 'ad no ev'nin' serviss. As was all fields in my grandfather's time, up to pretty near Knightsbridge, tho' Brompton Crescent were built, thro' bein' considered a fine place for the chest.

My fust place were out that way, and now when I goes along the Fulham Road, I stares agin to see 'ow they've been and built; cos I can jest remember them a-buildin' New Chelsea Church, as were a wonder, and the Dook of Wellin'ton's own brother

were rector, as wasn't quite up to the nocker, so wasn't never made a bishop; and the parties as my mother washed for, in Chaney Walk, didn't 'old with 'im, thro' bein' that 'ropped up in the curit, as preached the gospel, and were delicit in the chest, so they took and built 'im a church all to 'isself, and I've 'eard say as 'is side-board of plate were a sight, tho' 'is 'ealth were dreadful bad, poor man! and yet lived to be a good old age, as shows wot care will do, for I've 'eard say as that minister's life were passed in studyin' of 'is 'ealth, as in course were 'is dooty, for it's no use 'avin' of a fine 'ouse, and everythink as this world can give you, unless you 'as 'ealth to enjoy it; and I'm sure I've 'eard say as most bishops dies martyrs to gout, as is brought on by studyin' and leadin' them 'ard lives at college, as in course they keeps up to the end of their days, as is their dooty to persewere in the ways as they was brort up in.

I must say as I'd rather be a publickin's widder than a bishop, cos there was Mrs. Bimber, when he were took that suddin, poor feller! she carried on the busyness, and married the brewer's collector when the year were out; but, bless me, I remembers a archbishop's widder, as arter livin' in a pallis, and bein' treated like a queen, with 'er carridges and 'orses, as come down to a small 'ouse in Brompton, and nothing but a 'ired fly; tho' she 'ad seven

dorters, as was all married to clergymen with good livin's; but the eldest son, as went into the army, he got thro' a deal of money, and were 'is mother's pet, so she pinched 'erself a good deal for 'im, as 'ad to keep up a fine 'ouse, thro' 'avin' married into a 'igh family, tho' no money. So give me a good pub, as you can stick to afore all your pallises, as you may be turned out on as soon as your 'usbans breath is out of 'is nostrums.

I'm sure no bishop never 'ad a more glorious funeral than Bimber, and not a dry eye in the 'ouse for days, and she did show respect to 'is memory, for the crape reached 'er elbers, and tho' 'er weeds were too flyaway for me, yet she wore 'em the twelve month and a day, with not a curl wisible, only a front in bands. I think as she spent forty pounds over the stone, as she 'ad put up for 'im, and give orders as the wault should be made big enuf for 'er and another to foller, so 'ad a eye from the fust on settlin' agin, cos they 'ad no children as ever outlived their teeth, poor little dears! tho' I do think as they was kep' up too late ever to thrive, with that gas a-flarin' their eyes out, and am sure as she did used to give 'em the corjels, so as they mightn't disturb Bimber, as couldn't abear to 'ave 'is rest broke at night, thro' 'im 'avin' of a short temper if anythink put 'im out.

But, dear me, 'ow things is got changed, for I

do declare I don't know where to lay my 'and on a old-fashioned pub; as they've been and done away with the signs, and you don't never see no checkers at the door-post, and I 'ardly ever see a pot-boy about with 'is tray of beer, and 'ave give up a-callin' of it in the streets, the same as pots as they won't 'ardly lend out. Ah! things is dreadful changed, but that's the way of the world, as won't stop still for none on us, but goes round and round like a 'orse in a mill, as the sayin' is, and about as lively. Not as ever I can make out wot they means by its goin' round, when nobody don't feel it movin'.

But, as Brown says, it's foolishness to say as you don't believe things, cos you don't understand 'em. So I always believes wot them as knows better than me tells me. Cos in course if I can't prove as their rong, I ain't no right to 'ave the cheek for to contradict 'em as 'ave studied sich things all their lives long, and for my part I can't never make out wot's the use of them moon and stars; cos as to the moon, she's best part of 'er time under a cloud, and then when she does come out she don't give no light worth speakin' on, but jest a night or two when full; and as to the stars, tho' they certingly looks pretty, if they was to fall out of their places, we shouldn't miss 'em much; tho' I've been a-lookin' at 'em all these years, I'm jest

where I were when a gal. I loves to look at the stars, and I do certingly agree with them as says—

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
'Ow I wonders wot you are;"

cost they ain't no use up in the 'evans above, nor yet on the earth beneath.

But, law, when you begins to think, you'd better shet up and be quiet, for the more you stares the more you thinks, as the sayin' is, and can't make nothink out of nothink.

"Well," says Brown, as 'ad been a-spellin' of the paper from one end to the other, "I'm blessed, old lady, if you ain't been a-goin' it."

"Well," I says, "I've been obliged to do the talkin', thro' Mrs. Flinders, poor thing, bein' stone deaf, as the sayin' is."

"But I thought," says Brown, "as she come in to 'ear all about this ere Cleapatrer's Needle, as they've been and towed all the way from Egyp' to Wes'minster Bridge, as the penny steamers will take you alongside on."

"Then," I says, "I'm on," for I were a-talkin' to Miss Pilkinton about a-goin' out in a opin boat for to see it, tho' I didn't fancy, thro' bein' nearly drownded, bein' rowed over from Wes'minster to Lambeth Stairs, as 'ave made me as timbersome over the water as a mad dog; and I'm sure any dog in 'is right senses might 'ave a 'orrer of the

Tems if he was to notice the lots of dead dogs as is bein' a-floatin' about, as didn't ought to be allowed, no more than bathin and drains, in wot parties as got to make their teas with, tho' it certingly do draw wonderful."

"Well," says Brown, "if you want for to see it afloat, you'd better go afore as they lands it."

I says, "I shall go to-morrer arternoon, purvided always as their ain't no thick fog, as you can't see thro'."

"Well," says Brown, "they'll soon be a-settin' of it up."

I says, "I 'opes not like a gravin imidge, cos if they do, they'll 'ave the Bishop of London down on 'em, as won't 'ave no such goin's on."

Says Brown, "It certingly 'as gravin imidges all over it."

"Then," I says, "it didn't ought to be allowed to be put in no church, nor yet near anywhere, for fear as parties should take and fall down before it, even in passin', as might be a bit of oringe peel, or only the mud, let alone a sharp frost, as it ain't too late for, cos I've 'eard say as the 'ardest frost ever knowed set in in February, as froze over the Tems, with a ox roasted 'ole, as would cost a little fortun' now as rump stakes is sixteen pence a pound." I says, "I wonders where they'll put it."

Brown says, "Now they're a-talkin' about Grinidge, tho' some sticks to Kensin'ton Pallis."

"Well," I says, "that's all werry fine; but 'ow to get it there, as ain't like the trunk of a tree, as you can take in a timber wagon, nor yet on the top of a bus."

Brown bust out a-larfin, and says, "Why, don't you know as they must float it cos of its weight, as would crush in all the roads all round London."

"Well," I says, "it did ought to be treated with respect, thro' 'avin' 'ad England's best blood washed over it, the same as Sir John Moore, as was killed on the werry sea-shore, as he were a-imbarkin' of 'is troops, and I well remembers the song about 'im berried all of a 'urry, poor feller, as is werry solim words:—

> "'Not a drum were 'eard
> Nor a funeral note,
> As 'is copse by the armpits we 'urried.'"

"Rubbish," says Brown, "'rampits,' you mean."

I says, "I don't know what pits they were, but they was no doubt glad to 'ave any pit to berry 'im decent in, like a noble sojer, tho' I don't see as they need 'ave berried 'im in 'is marshal's cloak, as must 'ave wanted it 'isself, a-goin' to sea as he was at night, but in course them Field Marshals is that

'ardy, they'd go to glory in their shirt-sleeves without a murmur."

"But," I says, "I do 'ope as they won't go a-rollin' this 'ere hobbylisk thro' the streets, as might crush 'em all in, jest as the new main drains 'as been laid down, as would cut off the gas and water, and be for all the world like a hearthquake, a-breakin' out and swallerin' up everybody all round, as is preaps why it were left so many years a-stickin' in the sands of Egyp', thro' a-breakin' down the cart as were a-movin' it, along with that Clearpatrer's other goods, and 'er a-settin' on the top on a bundle of beddin', as is 'ow Mrs. Weldin got tipped into the Surrey Canal, in movin' from the Kent Road to Peckham, thro' the wheel of the cart a-comin' in contract with a post, tho' the man as were a-settin' on the sharps a-drivin', said it were Mrs. Weldin's wait as 'ad done it, tho' it were really 'is fault, as 'adn't no right along the towin'-path in a thick fog, as would 'ave been that poor woman's end, only, as luck would 'ave it, there were a barge full of mud and muck, as she pitched into, so fell soft, tho' pretty nigh suffercated, and 'ad to be washed in the canal afore they'd take 'er in anywheres, and every stitch of 'er clothes burnt, down to 'er werry garters; as 'ave give me a 'orrer of bein' swallered up by land or water, as don't often 'appen."

Though Mrs. Mellins, as 'ave been in the West Hinges, and 'ave got nigger blood in 'er wains, I'm sure, she told me as she'd see the hearth hopen of itself in Southy Merriker, as swallered up a 'ole town like a hoister, with the sea rushin' to drown the rest; but as I says, that don't prove as the hearth moves, cos there's a-many things as will open, but not move, the same as a dry well or a cesspool."

Mrs. Weldin she were took in at the Chequers, as I were a-sayin', give me a good 'olesome respectable public, as is a thing as I do understand, where a poor man can go and 'ave 'is bit of wittles cooked for 'im, with a good large pot of taters on the tap-room fire, as they charge a penny for, and lends a plate and knife and fork, as is really a 'ome to many a workin' man as ain't married or else a widderer, or for that matter might be married, with 'is good lady upstairs, and is not conwenient to 'ave no cooking about, but certingly it pretty nigh cooked Mrs. Weldin's goose, as tho' she lived for years, never seemed the same woman, for 'er complexion were spiled, and she lost 'er 'air, and never got the same shade as suited 'er agin, tho' she did 'ave it made up lighter, as some'ow didn't become 'er, and as for takin' off years put 'em on at least 'arf a score.

'Er and me was relations thro' the mother, tho'

she never was a light figger when a gal, and 'arf a 'ead shorter than me thro' 'avin' no neck, as is why she never wore ear-rings, so that's why I always 'ad a 'orrer of overloadin' a cart.

Miss Pilkinton she's such a reglar fancy old maid, as talked a lot of rubbish about fairies a-carryin' that Needle. I says, "I should like to see the fairy as would do it. Why, it wouldn't go on the top of a bus, tho' it might be took by the Underground Railway if they was to blast it with powder, as in course would drive it thro', as could be done by night, when there wasn't no traffic goin' on and nobody about but the porters, as in course is paid to do odd jobs at extra 'ours."

Well, any'ow, I'm glad it's 'ere, and shall be delighted when they've been and deciphered it. I says, "They may cipher and rite too, but they won't get me to believe in a 'urry as they can make out them figgers, cos suppose they was to stuff us up with a lot of rubbish, who is to say as it ain't truth."

Says Brown to me, "Now, if you're a-goin' to look at this ere Needle, don't you be a-scrougin' and a-pushin', as may find yourself in the water, for I 'ear as there's thousins a-crowdin' on Westminster Bridge, and nothink to see arter all."

"Well then," I says, "Government did ought to be persecuted for gettin' money under false pretences."

Says Brown, "Wot 'ave Government got to do with it?"

"Why," says I, "in course it's included in the six million as they want to get out of us."

"Not a chance," says Brown; "why, that's in case we wants to give them Rooshins a 'idin'."

"Ah!" I says, "so they tells us; but in course there'll be nice pickin's, and they'll pay the Needle out of them, as it's a mussy as it didn't slip thro' their fingers, and now it 'ave arrived everybody's too much took up over this 'ere wote of credit to bother about it, and for my part I do not believe as parties would never take no trouble about anythink as didn't 'appen in the dull season, when there's nothink partikler goin' on, and then the papers lays 'old of any rubbish so as to fill up with, and that's 'ow it were we 'ad sich a row over them Stauntons, as wasn't worth the time as they took up, but it's wonderful the things as is made out of nothink when Parlymint ain't a-settin' and a jawin' night after night, a-destroyin' of their 'ealths and keepin' of their good ladies awake, if not a-settin' up, and no wonder as Lord Bakinsfield looks such a orful colour, and as the people's Willyam, as he did used to be, looks that sour, let alone the bad fall as he've 'ad a-tryin' to run counter to them Conservatives, as seems to 'ave broke out in a fresh place, as the sayin' is, as is a sell for Joe Barnes who 'ave been

a-sayin' for years past as they was all dead and berried. But, as I were a-sayin' the other evenin', I'm sure as it's a downright mussy as them Turks should 'ave took it into their 'eads to 'ave massacred them Burglarians at that dull time, when there wasn't 'ardly nothink to think about, let alone for the papers to rite about, cos at a real busy time they might 'ave massacred everybody, without parties a-sendin' them cross questions and crooked ansers, about which side were impalin' the others, for nobody now wouldn't care about that Balum Mistress, as they called it. Certingly it were werry interestin' to read about that parson as took 'is family a-travellin' in flannin' shirts, thro' a-givin' up washin' to save espence, and that old gent as liked a good dinner and bottle of wine, till the bill came in. Then these here Burglarian trocities seemed for to 'ave took and woke up every one, as even bishops as was at the sea-side for a little rest arter bein' worked to death, poor fellers, 'ad the strength for to take up their pens for to address their flocks, as they call 'em; and as to Spurgin as six weeks at Margit 'ad made a man on agin, thro' a-leavin' off 'ot suppers during the great 'eat; why, he were up and at 'em, as the Dook of Wellin'ton said to the Guards at Waterloo, when he see Bonnyparty thro' 'is telescope a-packin' up 'is things, and 'avin' of 'em put in 'is travellin' car-

ridge as he were a-goin' to bolt with, as was things as he always went to battle in, as is to be seen any day at Madame Tussor's, as I suppose bort 'em of the Dook of Wellinton's wally, along with 'is old tooth brush, and other wallyables as he 'adn't no use for in 'is hexile at St. Elener, cos he never took no more pride in 'isself, and give up washin' on that barrin rock. So Spurgin he up and spoke, a-wishin' all them Turks cut right off, as he give it out to be prayed as they might be.

I never shan't forget, poor dear, 'ow Mrs. Pollin she come in all of a twitter and a tremble one Sunday night, as couldn't 'ardly look up till I give 'er a 'ole glass of my corjial, as is a fine thing for any one as 'ave 'ad a shock, thro' bein' the werry best of everythink, includin' of Cogniac brandy and carraways with cardymums throwed in, as 'ad been upset, poor thing, thro' a-ridin' between two misshinaries, inside of a full omblebus, arter 'earin' that there Spurgin a-prayin' as all them Turks might be esterminated, as is easier prayed for than done, as Brown were a-sayin', thro' bein' them millions as lives in reglar 'ordes, as must be routed out fust, tho' in course Spurgin don't know nothink much beyond the Helefant and Castle. Not as I 'olds with 'ordin' things up myself, as only 'arbors dust, and the moths sure to get in, partikler if anything woolly, like a Turk's 'ead. But as Brown were a-sayin',

Spurgin 'ad better go on a-prayin' for a fine incum as he gets, and enjoy 'isself in peace and plenty—cos that's about 'is size—and leave them Turks and all other unbelievers alone, as is wot some considers Spurgin, and in course he, no doubt, 'olds as everyone is lost as don't support 'im.

Says Mrs. Pollin, "If you talks like that, Mr. Brown, I must leave the 'ouse, for I can't set and 'ear that priveleged wessel run down."

Says Brown, "I ain't a-runnin' 'im down, as must get 'is livin', the same as others as drives a roarin' good trade, and lives well at it; and wot's the use of 'im a-runnin' 'is 'ead agin the Turks, the same as that there Gladstin, as belonged to that party once as took us into a war to support 'em twenty years ago."

"Ah," I says, "and will be a-goin' in for the New Jerusilem next, as is a-bein' built that fine, and no doubt Disreely will 'ave a pallis there, now as he've been and made 'isself a earl, as in course, to think of it, makes that there Gladstin that wild as he don't know who to pitch into next. Cos he tried a-ritin' to the Pope, as didn't even anser 'is letter; so now he's a-tryin' wot he can do with the Turk. But, law bless me," I says, "if they only lets them Turks alone they'll soon drop to bits of theirselves if they're so rotten, as is arf idiots, and and as to them Burglarians, I'm sure I knowed a

party as was littery, and went out there to rite 'ome to a paper, and says as they're the dirtiest beasts as ever lived, and the goin's on as he told Brown as he see all about the place, why, I'm sure the sooner sich wretches is cut off the better, as is a disgrace to the name of Christshun; and if Spurgin 'olds with them ways, why he'd better go and jine them, along with the City Temple, as sent their love to that there Beecher over in Merryker, as kisses 'is deekins, and goes in for free love all over the place like a camp-meetin', as the Methodists is so fond on, and calls them rewivals, as no doubt they are."

Brown says, "You don't suppose as any one cares a fardin wot them Turks does with the Burglarians. It's only for to get up a party sperrit agin old Dizzy, and try and turn 'im out, as 'ave got 'isself into a snug corner, and don't care a blow wot 'appens to nobody."

"Ah," I says, "don't say that, Brown; for I'm sure no true Inglishman is ever deaf to any sufferin'; but as to Disreely, he've played a fine game, he 'ave."

"Yes," says Brown, "no doubt he's a clever feller, but it's all werry fine to talk of 'is lovely ritins, but if he hadn't took and 'ave married a lady with a pile of tin, he might 'ave rote novels till 'is 'air come out of curl and 'is fingers fell off,

afore he'd 'ave got to be a earl. It's the old story, 'Money makes the mare to go.'"

"Ah!" I says, "that's true, that is; and you can't wonder either, when you comes to think wot a price things is, and as to a sov'rin, if you've got one, why it don't go no further than fifteen shillin's did used to when I was a gal, and one didn't never used to 'ear all this fuss about massycreein' Jews and Turks and infidels, as all come nat'ral like, thro' it bein' their naturs to, as is bein' brought to the front now-a-days, and thinks theirselves somebody as all wants a-keepin' in their place like the servant gals. Not as Queen Wictorier can be bothered about Turks and sich like things, as wants a quiet life, as is no doubt why she sent old Dizzy to the 'Ouse of Lords, to git 'im out of the way, cos he was always a-comin' in a-fidgettin' of 'er about all manner, and wantin' 'er to buy up the Black Sea, for to match the Sewers Canal, and might come in 'andy; but as Brown were a-sayin', it's no use our doin' nothink unless we was to anex Egyp', and then we shouldn't want no more Clearpatrer's Needles, nor yet 'ave them Pirrymids floated over 'ere; cos we could go there and look at 'em. Cos I don't see as we shouldn't do like our naybours, and 'elp ourselves to wot we want, like that there King of Italy, as collared things right and left as didn't belong to 'im, as in course is the same as

we've done over in Injier, and as the Merrykins is doin' by them Injins, as 'ave 'ad the impidence not to like railroads a-comin' thro' their 'untin' grounds, as if they'd a right to 'ave anything as a white man wants, a-imitatin' some of them swells as goes to Scotland a-stalkin' all over the place, and won't 'ave no railroads near, nor yet no cottages built for to disturb the game, how they would stare if the Rooshins and Prooshins, or even Turks, was to come with a lot of sojers and make a railway thro' it, so as to 'ave it in their power; cos if we talks to the Turks and Rooshins, we did ought to 'ave a word with the Merrykins, cos red men 'as their rights the same as whites. And then look at the bullyin' work as 'ave been lately over them Negro blacks."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Pollin, "but wot 'opes of their bein' renewed characters thro' Stanley a-goin' among 'em with the Gospel."

"Yes," says Brown, "and shot 'em down right and left, like wild beasts, afore they'd spoke to 'im, for fear as they might be a-goin' to do 'im 'arm."

"Well," I says, "let's 'ope as nobody won't come 'ere with no Gospels; and I'm sure if he wants to do good to Negro blacks, he'd better stop at 'ome, for of all the dirty, drinkin', idle beasts, it's them 'mancipated blacks down South, in Merry-

ker, as I've see myself, as wants renewin', clothes and all."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Pollin, "but some on 'em's sweet characters."

I says, "Then all as I can say is they don't look neither sweet nor clean."

"Ah!" she says, "you should 'ave 'eard wot was said on 'em by a coloured minister, as I 'eard preach from them parts, as was beautiful doctrine."

I says, "All right; let 'im preach wot he likes, and let them as likes them black ministers 'ave 'em; but," I says, "the best thing as he can do would be to go and teach them nasty, drunken, dirty, black beasts, as I've see myself, a-wallerin' like pigs in the dust, all about a place called Richmond, out in Merryker, but no more like Richmond than chalk's like cheese, fellers as wanted a taste of the lash to make 'em work, and not ill-use their women and children, and leave 'em to starve, cos they won't work for 'em, and I 'ave 'eard say as them Servyuns uses the women like dogs, and makes 'em work like slaves; and then there's them Circashuns, as is where the cream comes from, as calls theirselves Christshuns, and will sell their own children to be the wilest of slaves to the Turks; not in course as them Turks ought to go a-'ittin' 'em about, and murderin' on 'em right and left; but they won't leave off for Gladstin, and in course

Queen Wictorier don't want no Gladstins, nor yet Disreelys for to tell 'er 'er dooty, as no doubt 'ave jest been and sent 'er orders out to them Turks to drop it, and not let 'er 'ear no more of sich ways, cos wotever them Burglarians may be, she won't 'ave no wivysection, or else she'll jest give 'er son Edinburrer the straight tip, as'll sail down on them Turks, and blow 'em out of the water with a ion-clad, afore they can say Jack Robinson; tho' in course she don't want to be down on 'em too 'ot, jest as they've been and let one Sultin kill 'isself and 'ad to put another in a mad-'ouse, thro' 'im goin' off 'is chump, and enuf to make 'im, poor wretch! not as Queen Wictorier 'ave any cause for to love them Sultins, arter the way as that there one be'aved as come over 'ere on a wisit, as she turned out of 'er own pallis for to make room for 'im, jest as if he'd been 'er own uncle, and then went and left it in sich a beastly mess, as she ain't never been able to live in it since, beyond a day or two, and spilte 'er best bed-room; cos when you comes for to 'ave your meals in bed, as is all cooked with onions, ile and garlic throwed in, and your 'air done every day with castor ile and hotter of roses, besides a-sentin' of yourself with patcherley and musk, it's a good long time afore you could get your bed sweet agin, tho' you might 'ave everythink sent to the scourers, and the ceilin' whitewashed,

as is a deal of trouble, let alone espence, and all for a dirty beast of a Turk, as 'is morals was wuss than 'is 'abits, and shouldn't never darken my doors, and Queen Wictorier wouldn't never 'ave 'ad on a wisit if she'd 'ave see 'im in 'is troo colours, and knowed of 'is goin's on, as is disgraceful, and ain't been painted a 'bit blacker than he is, as is fotty-graft shows 'im in 'is troo colours, tho' Madame Tussor she 'ave been and put the best face on 'im, as is 'er ways with all them decomposed sov'rins, and other conwix, as she keeps in 'er chamber of 'orrers, at sixpence extra, jest as a warnin' for young people, the same as Wainright, and sich-like cattle, as is all werry well for examples, as them Turks did ought to take warnin' by, or will come to a bad end theirselves in the long run; cos tho' we may put Roosher back for a bit, we shan't be able to keep it up, cos we all knows as you can't 'elp a man as won't 'elp 'isself, as is wot the thieves all says."

Miss Biber, she's a-livin' along with Mrs. Padwick, as 'ave kep' a school in 'er time, and knows all about the world, as is a nice woman in 'er way, no doubt, tho' I can't stand 'er a-settin' me rite constant, so never opins my mouth afore 'er, tho' certingly werry wonderful to 'ear 'er talk 'istory, a-sayin' as Alesander the Grate found out Egyp' as that there Queen Clearpatrer were

descended from, and as the needle 'adn't nothink to do with work, as is for all the world like Mrs. Corby's sewin' machine, as she might as well sell for old ion for wot it's worth to 'er, as works with a traddle, as they calls it, but is for all the world like the treadmill for workin' your limbs; and as to Mrs. Corby, tho' she'd worreted 'im to buy it for 'er, and never done a 'and's turn with it, except the fust day, when she sent the needle slap thro' 'er 'usban's thum'-nail, as made 'im yell agin, and no wonder, as through bein' a lock-stitch might 'ave brought on lock-jaw; but Miss Biber, she's all among the anshent gods and godesses, as I'm sure wasn't no great shakes, as went about in the wood with 'ardly a rag to their backs, as would 'ave been all werry well if they'd 'ave kep' theirselves to theirselves, but did used to throw theirselves in parties' ways, as was shepherds, and sometimes them as was out with the 'ounds; not as I could foller Miss Biber, as were a-talkin' about 'ow Paris come to be destroyed thro' a apple as he give to them denuded fieldmales, as there were a picter on in the National Gallery that day as we went, and then a-goin' along, she stops afore a print shop and says,

"Ah! there she is!"

I says, "Who?"

"Why," she says, "Clearpatrer out for a sail."

"Well, then," I says, "she did ought to be ashamed of 'erself, as ain't no better than them fieldmale gods. I'm sure if she went about in that state, no wonder asses was 'er death."

"No," says Miss Biber, "not asses, but hasps, as was fastened on 'er breast."

"Law!" I says, "wot agony! and I'm sure if them hasps shet 'arf as tight as them as we 'ave put new to our winder, it must 'ave been a hagonizin' death, as bad as them thum'-screws as old Betsy were so fond on."

Miss Biber she ain't one to anser you, but only stares with a toss of the 'ead; not as I cares whether it's asses or hasps as that there fieldmale died on, and no wonder somethink bit 'er, for she wasn't 'arf clothed, and she'd only a needle jest for a curiosity, for she couldn't never 'ave 'ad no use for it, as seemed to me to be dressed up in wails and them loose things, as was all a-slippin' off 'er back.

Miss Biber says, "Oh! 'ow lovely! 'ow classic!"

"Well," I says, "she may be lovely; but as to 'er morals, I should say they wasn't much account, and I do 'ope as she won't set the fashion for to come in with 'er needle, for I've 'eard a deal of

talk about parties bein' dressed classickle and 'igh 'art, so why not go back to Clearpatrer, and go about like 'er, with 'ardly a rag to 'er back. Not as Queen Wictorier ever would stand it, and I'm sure if any of them forriners was to come any sich games on a visit over 'ere, she'd soon give orders to 'ave 'em run in.

We 'adn't no sooner 'eard as that there needle were a-layin' off Westminster Bridge, than away we went, me and Mrs. Padwick, Miss Biber, and Miss Pilkinton, and walked along Oxford Street, for to get the bus as puts you down at the werry door for tuppence; but of all the ruff parties I ever did ride with, it's them yaller busses, as we 'ad to fite our way up the steps, and that young man may be a bus conductor, but don't know 'ow to conduct 'isself, a-'ollarin' out to the driver when I 'ailed 'im, "'Old on, Bill, 'ere's another Clearpatrer a-comin'."

So I says, "It's like your impidence, a-callin' of a respectable wife and mother by the name of such a fieldmale as that?"

"Never mind," says a party inside, as 'elped me in, "if you last as long, you'll do."

I says, "I should be sorry to be such a character as she were, tho' I suppose there was always sich like parties in the world, and will be to the end, not as that makes 'em any better, tho' they

was 'eathens, as wurshipped the sun, as Miss Biber says they believed was their father."

I says, "They must 'ave been beastly hignorant to think as your son could be your father, or your father be your son."

Miss Biber says, "I'm a-talkin' about the great luminary."

I says, "Are you? But he couldn't never, even before the flood, 'ave been both anybody's father and the son at the same time."

When we got out of that bus to cross the bridge, as were that crowded as put me in mind of that there time when there was a clown a-goin' to sail down a river in a washin'-tub drawed by geese, as the parties scrouged so on to a spenshun bridge for to see, as they broke down the bridge and was drownded for their pains, as didn't ought to be allowed, and never was so disappinted as when I fust see that needle a-floatin' about like a railway ingine broke loose."

So I says to Miss Biber, "You don't mean to say as that is 'ow it 'ave come all the way from Egyp'?"

"Yes," she says, "it 'ave been towed in the wake of a wessel."

"Wot!" I says; "behind it?"

She says, "Yes."

"Well," I says, "there's only one way as it

could be done, as would be a magnit in the end of a ship, as went fust and then the Needle a-follerin' of it, as it would do to the world's end; leastways, all round the world, cos in course if the world is round, why, there ain't no end to it."

Miss Biber, she was for 'avin' a boat for to go off and look at the Needle closer; "cos," she says, "I should like to 'ave a peep."

I says, "Wot's it a-stoppin' 'ere for?"

"Oh!" she says, "there's a claim on it for selvidge."

I says, "They never sewed a selvidge side, not even with any needle in this world."

"No," she says; "but it's wot them as picked it up claims for their trouble."

"Then," I says, "why ever not let 'em 'ave it?"

"Because they can't make out 'ow much it is."

"Then," I says, "let 'em wait till they can measure it, as they will no doubt do when it is unpacked, tho' I don't see 'owever any needle in this world can 'ave a selvidge side, as belongs to needlework certingly, but is the materials, not the needle."

We met Mrs. Yellman down by the steps as leads to wot did used to be Lambeth Walk, as is now all done away with.

Mrs. Yellman, she is a serous turn, with Scrip-

ter at 'er fingers' ends; leastways, is always a-quotin', as makes Brown that mad, cos, as he says, you can make a text turn any way.

Well, she were a-sayin' as this 'ere Clearpatrer's Needle was a gross idol as were set up for to 'oner the sun, and if we was to put it up agin it would bring a judgment, as might be a hearthquake or a pestilence.

"Well," I says, "I'm sure nobody won't be sich a ass as to think of settin' up on the Tems Embankmint to 'oner the sun this time of year, when he ain't out for days together."

So Miss Biber, she were up and says as Joseph in Egyp' married one of the priest's dorters.

I says, "Why, priests never marries."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Yellman, "that's Popery, as is the wust of all idolatry; but it's over now," she says, "as the Pope is dead, and there ain't room to bury another, so they must give it up, as is 'igh time, cos," she says, "Beastmark won't let 'em 'ave another."

I says, "Oh! won't he?" I says; "preaps before he interferes with other people's religions, he'd better look at 'ome, as is in a nice mess; as I were a-readin' in the paper that thousins over there 'ad been and give up all religion, and turned wuss than Turks."

Well, while we was a-talkin', a waterman come

up and offered for to take us off cheap and row us round the Needle.

"Law!" I says, "I ain't been in a opin boat since quite a gal, when I went with my dear mother from Chelsea Stairs to Woxall Gardins, and see Mr. Simpson and ten thousin lamps, as were one of the royal property."

Says the waterman, "Ah, mum! you're one of the good old sort, as it does my 'art good to listen to; as lived all my life in Lambeth, and my own grandfather were the 'ermit at Woxall over twenty years, and used to set there all night till the blackbirds and thrushes would begin to sing, and remembered it all fields from Lambeth to Norwood, afore Woxall Bridge were built or the Plenipotentiary at Millbank were thought on; and see all the Allied Suvrins about the place as if they was nobody, as am seventy-five, man and boy."

"Ah!" I says, "I've 'eard my dear mother talk about it, as would be eighty-seven if livin', and remembered George the Third as if it were yesterday."

Says that waterman, "I should like to 'ave the 'oner of carryin' a lady like you off to this Needle."

Mrs. Yellman, she were nervous over it; but Miss Biber, she said as it would look foolish to come so near and not see the thing.

"Well," I says, "it's gettin' werry foggy, so if

we don't look sharp we shall see nothink of the wessel."

So accordingly we got aboard that old party's boat, as were werry cranky; and for me, I 'ates a boat as wobbles about so in gettin' in, and then settin' down so low don't suit me; and when we was shoved off we werry nigh tipped over, as made Mrs. Yellman jump up.

So that old waterman says, "If you don't all want watery graves, you'll 'old that old fieldmale down."

So down we pulled 'er to 'er seat, as made the boat tip over a good deal on one side.

Says that waterman, "If anyone gets up agin, I'll knock 'er over the 'ead with my skull," and muttered sich orful langwidge as just then he runs into another boat-load, and of all the orful espressions as that other boat used, was enuf to sink us. Our old waterman, he give tung pretty free, a-sayin' as it wasn't 'is fault; he couldn't 'elp it, as he'd only got one arm to pull with, thro' roomatics 'avin' settled in 'is right arm elber. He kep' a-pullin' and a-pullin', that old man, and didn't seem to get no nearer to that there floatin' biler as they said was the Needle, and every now and then boats kep' a-bumpin' up agin us. At last a boat-full of ruffs come close alongside, and one on 'em shouts out "Whoa, Emma," as made Miss Biber,

as 'er name is Emma, bust into tears, thro' bein' that 'urt at sich a insult. Well, that old man he kep' a-puttin' of 'is oar under 'is knee, and takin' off a pull at a flat bottle as he 'ad in 'is pocket, as I should say by the smell were rum; and certingly I must say as he wanted it, for there were a 'eavy fog, and it struck chilly from the water; but we didn't seem to get no nearer that there wessel. So I ollers out to the old man, "Are you a-goin' to get us to that there Needle to-night, or not?"

He says, "All right; only I must get into the stream."

So he pulls away, and jest then someone shouts out, "Keep your tail out of the drink, old gal."

I didn't take no notice of sich insultin' remarks till a party in a boat come rowin' by, and says, "Why, if the old gal in the yaller shawl ain't got two-thirds under water." So as I 'ad a yaller shawl on I puts my 'and to feel my gownd, and sure enuf I was a-settin' over the side of the boat that far as I were reglar in the water. I were a-goin' to leap up when the old waterman ollers out, "If you dare get up I'll brain you." Jest then a penny steamer come by, and the swell on it nearly smothered us, and washed us with a tremendous bump up agin that there needle-case, as made us all three jump up, over went the boat. So givin' myself up for lost, as I should 'ave been

if I 'adn't took and knocked Mrs. Yellman over with my elber, and give a grab at some ropes as was 'angin' from that Needle. Mrs. Yellman she 'ung on to my skirts, as she took and tore off with a tight grasp. But I saved 'er life, for she were picked off me by a boat-'ook, while I was drored on to that Needle by my 'ead and shoulders. As to Miss Biber, the Tems perlice took 'er up, and so they did the old waterman, as were that overtook in licker as he didn't know where he was. The Tems police boat took us ashore, and as I wouldn't go to the 'ospital we went into a 'ouse, and I set a-tremblin' agin in my slip, till they brought a blanket and a good tumbler of something 'ot, as seemed to bring the life into me whilst my clothes was bein' dried, and thankful I was when dry enuf to go 'ome, with my skirt pinned on to my body. We took a bus, as was werry joggly, and a party as were in it with a large bundle, as was 'er 'usban's things from the 'Ospital, as give me a werry shady sort of account of the way as patients is neglected in them places, as I always 'ave 'ad an 'orrer on, since poor Mrs. Belper, as were took to one, thro' bein' seized suddin, and Belper took 'er 'imself with clean clothes, and everythink, and went to see 'er once or twice in that week, but 'earin' as she 'adn't got 'er senses back, and so didn't stop; but at the end

of a fortnight 'er own sister went with 'im, as said the poor creetur 'ad been neglected shameful, so they brought 'er away, and all the clothes as 'e'd took never unpacked, as 'adn't even took the trouble to shift 'er bed things all that time, as isn't a way as one should treat a dog in sickness; but in course some of them nusses only cares 'ow little trouble the patient gives 'em, it ain't likely as they'd look arter any one; not as I 'olds with a parcel of young ladies as calls theirselves Nightingales, a-playin' at nussin', as ain't proper, and may be all werry well for them sisters as you sees abroad, but not sights for parties as might be a-larkin' along with them young students, as is nat'rally full of their fun, as a 'ospital ain't a proper place for, in my opinion.

I must say as I'm glad I've seed that Needle safe in the Tems with my own eyes, and only 'opes as they won't let it slip thro' their fingers in landin' it, as might fall pint fust and knock a 'ole thro' the world, and come thro' somewheres unespected, as would be wuss than a earthquake a-breakin' loose; and as to where they're to put it, goodness knows, tho' in course it can't be left a-floatin' in the Tems, 'twixt wind and water, as the sayin' is, and don't believe as a-settin' of it up will bring a cuss on us like Mrs. Yellman will 'ave it, and should say as Greenwich 'Ospital would suit it werry well, now as the old penshuners is paid off, and a good riddance,

as was a reglar noosance; but you don't ketch me a-riskin' of my life over it no more, as 'ave never spoke to that Mrs. Yellman since, thro' 'er a-sayin' as I tried to drownd 'er in cold blood; and Miss Biber she says as it were all my fault as we was upset in that boat, tho' a party, when we landed, said to me, "You've 'ad a narrer squeak for your life, as I knowed you would 'ave as soon as I see you go off with that drunkin' old duffer, as ain't a reglar waterman."

"Well, then," I says, "he's a base deceiver, that's wot he is," and I'm sure I don't know wot one is to believe in this world, as can't be espected to believe in Clearpatrer's Needle, nor nothink else as lived so long ago, when a old waterman tries for to stuff you with a lot of lies, as is 'ighly disgraceful to a British tar, as 'ave braved a thousin years the battle and the breeze, jest as much as Clearpatrer's Needle, with all their bounce about it, tho' it may be as old as Joseph, and long before Moses were born or thought of. I'm sure I never 'ad a wuss cold, except one as I cort thro' the sweeps and Old Sinful.

"In course; and sweeps, like servints, is necessary evils, unless you gets good ones, as I'm sure Mr. Wheeble were, and swep' me over nine years in the Bow Road, and don't believe as ever he left a tea-spoonful of sut up the chimbly, when the job were over, as I always will 'ave done twice

a year, spring and fall, the same as my grandmother would always let blood, as is in my opinion agin natur, as must know best wot we wants in our wains, as am not one myself to 'old with no dosin' neither, cos I always says let well alone, as the sayin' is, and not do like Mrs. Chemley's dorter, as 'ad a corn on 'er middle toe, as stuck up thro' 'er shoe, so would 'ave it cut off, and walked with a limp up to the time as she emigrated, thro' marryin' a widderer with nine, as 'ad no luck in busyness 'ere, but good prospec's in Canada.

No, I never would myself 'ave no cuttin's, not even for a wart on the chin, with two 'airs a-growin' out, as they wanted to persuade me to 'ave took out by the roots.

But as I were a-sayin', the 'ouse must be cleaned up arter the sweeps, with the kitchen ceilin' whitewashed, and why not do it all under one, with Brown's back turned, never a-dreamin' of Mrs. Challin a-bein' unable for to come that week, thro' 'avin' 'ad a fortnight's work at the gas works, a-cleanin' all the paint in the board-room, where them directors sets, as is forty feet by twenty-eight, as is washed from one end to the other every spring, and whitewashed and painted every two years from top to bottom.

I was in a reglar fix, as the sayin' is, when she couldn't come, as I couldn't put the cleanin' off,

thro' espectin' Liza and 'er two eldest the follerin' week.

So the gal says to me, "There's a lady as is next door for washin' this week, as told me she were free three days from Toosday."

I says, "'Ow do you come to know 'er?"

"Why," she says, "she spoke to me over the wall, a-fetchin' in the props."

I says, "I don't 'old with no gossipin' over walls; but," I says, "if you sees 'er agin you can ask 'er if she can come for 'arf the day to-morrer, arter the sweeps is gone, and then the 'ole day the next day follerin'."

So she did ask 'er, as agreed to come accordin'.

I never won't 'ave the sweeps afore seven, a-ringin' you out of your bed afore daylight, but were obligated to say six, cos the whitewashers was seven, and about twelve o'clock in come that party, jest as they'd done, as 'er name were Grimley, as was a bunch of rags, and 'ad rum strong on 'er breath as soon as she come into the place.

She said as she'd only 'ad 'er noonin's, and didn't want nothink till dinner, and took off 'er bonnet and shawl, and I will say, set to work with a will, and soon 'ad the front kitchen like a pallis, arter the whitewashers 'ad splashed it all over.

I must say as that woman did a 'onest day's work, as said she were a widder with three to keep,

and sometimes only got eightpence for 'arf a day and eighteenpence for washin' once a week, from Old Sinful.

So I says, "I don't want to 'ear wot my naybours pays, but 'ere's a shillin' from me, and if you likes the tea-leaves you're welcome to 'em," as were well worth 'er while, for I always drink three shillin' and sixpence mixed, and the gal 'as 'ers independent, thro' a-likin' black.

I give 'er some odds and ends to take 'ome along with the tea-leaves, for the children's suppers, and says, "Now, mind you ain't later than seven, as there's all your work cut out for you, as the sayin' is."

She says, "I'm engaged next door in the mornin', but will be 'ere as soon as it's gone twelve."

"Well," I says, "don't be later, cos there's the paint in the front parlour to clean, as well as the passage."

She come about 'er time, but seemed singler in 'er ways, and wouldn't take 'er bonnet off, and walked about the passage in 'er pattens, as I told 'er I wouldn't allow on my floorcloth.

She says, "I always does in cleanin' paint, as I can reach 'igher in 'em, and Mrs. Claxton likes it."

I says, "Does she? Then I don't, as is a downright disgrace to the street, and 'ad come 'ome with a sailor reglar roarin' drunk in a 'ansom cab,

as she said were 'er brother-in-law, and were nearly as bad as 'im."

Well, she went to work with a will, and only went for 'er beer, tho' not gone long, and back she comes; and as soon as she'd 'ad 'er dinner, she says, "Now I'll 'ave a turn at this ile-cloth, as I'll bring up the colour on equal to new."

I says, "Don't use no scrubbin'-brush nor soap to it, as'll bring the paint off."

"Oh, dear, no!" says she; "I only uses the fluid, as is only like milk and water."

I didn't say no more, but goes down in the kitchen and fetches some things up, and the muslin blinds for the back and front parlour.

I 'eard that woman a-rubbin' and a-smearin' away at that passage for a good bit, and out I goes and see 'er pail a-lookin' as tho' it were full of whitewash, and 'er a-rensin' out a flannel as seemed all painty like.

I says, "Wotever are you doin'?"

"Oh!" she says, "I've been and sprinkled it all over with the fluid, and now am wipin' of it off with a damp flannel."

I thought as I should 'ave dropped. I says, "Get out of the place, do! Why, you're intosticated, and 'ave been a-washin' every bit of the paint off this new ile-cloth," and up I ketches that bottle, and if she 'adn't got a lot of corrosif sub-

limit in it, as she says as old Mr. Sinful next door 'ad give 'er, a-sayin', "Give Mrs. Brown's paint a clean down with this."

I says, "A wicked old wretch!" So I goes to the dust-'ole to throw that bottle in, but a-thinkin' better on it, as the sayin' is, takes and shies it slap over the wall into 'is gardin, as went thro' 'is cow-cumber frame with a crash.

He comes out a-'earin' of the noise, and I says, "Take that, you old rascal, and if ever you plays any more tricks with my paint, I'll pay you out," and in I goes and slams the door.

There was that woman, that in liquor as to be a-washin' down the paper in the passage without a-knowin' wot she were a-doin'.

So I calls to the gal to bring up 'er bonnet and shawl, as I put on 'er, and jest 'ands 'er out of the door, a-sayin, "When you're sober, come for your money."

She were too far gone to make any row, but set on the door-step.

I see old Sinful come out, and look up and down, and then beckon, and up come a perliceman, as come and spoke to Mrs. Grimley, as were past understandin' thro' drink.

I opens the door, and says, "Perlice, it ain't no good a-talkin' to 'er, she 'ad better go 'ome and sleep it off."

Says Old Sinful, "Ah! yet it is, she's got sense enuf left in 'er 'ead to tells us as you've got it, and the receiver is wuss than the thief."

I says, "Don't address none of your low life talk to me, you old willin'," and was a-goin' to shet door, when the perlice steps up and says, "You'd better give it up."

I says, "Give up wot?"

"Why," he says, "the old gent's property, as that woman says she brought in here."

I says, "All as she's brought in, I've been and pitched over 'is wall, a old blackguard, a-playin' 'is tricks on me."

Says Old Sinful, a-standin' at the bottom of the steps, "Search the place, perlice, as is two silver tea-spoons at the werry least."

So I says, "Search the place in welcome, for all the tea-spoons in this 'ouse is mine, with a B on every one."

Says Old Sinful, "I see 'er go and throw somethink in 'er dust-'ole jest now, and that's where she's put 'em."

I says, "You're welcome to look in, you old Poll Pry, perliceman and all."

So Old Sinful he come with the perlice thro' the 'ouse, and goes a-rushin' to the dust-'ole, as 'adn't much in it, and opens the lid, and begins a-pokin' about the cinders with 'is stick, and stretched over

to look well in, and down come the lid on 'im, sich a crash, a were a new one, and that 'eavy I thought it 'ad broke 'is back.

The perliceman he pulled 'im out, and steppin' back, if the old feller didn't come agin that woman's pail, as the gal 'ad brought out to empty, and left standin' there, and set down in it, a reglar tight fit, as me and the perlice couldn't 'ardly pull 'im out on it agin.

But it were jest as well as he did, for there in that pail were 'is two tea-spoons, as that woman 'ad been and prigged while 'is back were turned to get that stuff out of the cupboard to spile my paint with, as come 'ome to 'im; and as to payin' for 'is cowcumber-frame, I'll see 'im 'anged fust, and it's no use them a-tryin' that woman over the tea-spoons, cos they can't bring 'ome to 'er; so that's why I don't 'old with none of them cleanin' fluids, as is like some of them quack medsins as 'ave pisons in them, the same as some of them corf lozengers, as a party I know took and eat a box on clean off, between Bath and London, and were found insensible, with 'is watch and money gone, and a near squeak of 'is life, as strong coffee brought 'im round, with mustard plasters at the back of 'is neck and soles of 'is feet, as is fine things with a cold a-settlin' on your chest, as I got thro' a-standin' about that day, the same as I 'ad arter that Clearpatrer's Needle, as I wished a-stickin' in the sand, or as the

Rooshuns 'ad swallered afore ever I set eyes on it, as I considers a swindle, as Miss Biber says did ought to be set up, cos the French 'as got one in Paris.

"Yes," I says, "and a nice disgrace to 'em; a monyment of their willanies, as is a sing'ler lot, and likes their 'orrers and terrors to rein over 'em, the same as that there Robyspear, as it come 'ome to at last, a willin as John Bull would soon 'ave settled; not as I considers 'Arry the Heighth much better, nor yet that red face Oliver Crumbwell, tho' he certingly did murder most of 'is henemies, except King Charles, in opin fight, as is goin's on as I do 'ope won't never come to pass no more, as is all werry well for forriners, but ain't things as we cares about at our own doors brought 'ome to us, leastways wouldn't never suit the British lion, as don't like them things, and not even the ruffs, as 'ates bloodshed; for as to massacreein' the Dook of Cambridge, cos he's a gen'ral, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or Cardnal Mannin', jest to spite the Catherlics, I don't believe as the biggest ruff as ever lived in Ingland would think of such a thing; not even if they was to meet in 'Igh Park for to release the Claimint, as they calls a nobleman a langwidgin' in Dartmoor; but they may whistle a long while afore he rubs 'is rags agin a street post agin, as did ought to 'ave 'ad a lifer, a willin; an' will get it no doubt 'otter when he comes out, if he

tries any of 'is games on agin; with 'is draggletail wives, and old Bogies, and 'is Wollies, and Gilferds, and Rivers, and Kineelies, all a-tryin' to get a-livin' out of 'im, as it's a pity as he keeps on a-frettin' so to get free, for he ain't a wail, so as they could make a somethink out of 'is blubber."

"I'm sure sperrits saved my life, as I will always say, tho' I 'ear as them teatotalers is a-'oldin' meetin's all over the place, and one on 'em went agin wine and sperrits that wiolent on Clarkinwell Green, a-sayin' as they was sent by the devil for to tempt men to sin, and not a-blessin' as the Almighty 'ave give to cheer the 'art of men, as is wot Cardnal Mannin' and the Archbishop of Canterbury both thinks, and if they can't trust theirselves with a glass, without a-goin' too far, why, then in course they're both right for to turn it up altogether; but let 'em mind their own ways, as in course not been publickins nor nothink in that line, don't know much about the trade; but if they've been able to convert one another, that's all right, but they did ought all to take the pledge agin pride and all them other worldly pumps, as there's a good many to be found among teatotalers, as is for the most part a washy lot, and werry often comes to a watery end, the same as my own godfather off the coast of Bombay, not as ever he were no teatotaler either ashore or at sea, and some did even think as

that's 'ow he cum to 'is end, poor feller, not as my mother, as were 'is own fust cousin, ever would believe as he wouldn't turn up agin, as he had afore, with preserved ginger and spices, with a chaney crape shawl, as I've got by me now, with two poll parrits, as screeched frightful night and day, and could swear for all the world like Christshuns; besides, their langwidge, as the sailors 'ad been and learned 'em, wasn't fit for a quiet street to 'ear, partikler with a minister livin' oppersite, as set with 'is winder open all weathers, thro' 'is breath bein' that bad with as'mer as you could 'ear 'im draw it across the street, and never could lay down on 'is right side with six pillers under 'is 'ead, as was supported entire by charity, thro' bein' a aged pilgrim, Sion-ward bound, as he often told me, as would 'ave a chat out of 'is winder in passin', and told me a deal about renewin' grace, as he were always a-lookin' for signs on in me; and I don't think as he's ever likely to find none, cos in course as one gets on in years, the figger will spread, and things as I wore ten years ago won't nearly meet round me.

But talk of grace, I don't think as them werry close-fittin' dresses shows parties' figgers off, partikler when drored in that tight round the knees, like Maria Gittins, as 'ave got one leg a deal

shorter than the other, as makes 'er walk with a 'op and a twist, as wants room for 'er limbs to play free, and sometimes plays too free, specially in a bus as she didn't ought to get into, for to my certing knowledge, last time I were in one with 'er, she kicked seven out of nine passengers, a-gettin' in, as didn't take it in good part, and one old gent were werry shirty when she set down with a flop in 'is lap, as 'ad 'is 'at on 'is knee, as she reg'lar flattened down, besides a-ketchin' 'old of parties both sides for to support 'er to a seat, and give me sich a turn, for there was a elderly gent a-settin' oppersite me as I thought looked sing'ler, with blue spectacles, and 'is nose a sort of a lead colour. Well, if that there Marja didn't take and give 'im a shove with 'er elber backards as knocked off 'is 'at and 'is wig, with 'is specks and 'is nose. I give sich a scream when I see 'is nose a-flyin' off 'is face, as in course were artyfishal, and made of gutter percher, poor feller, as no doubt 'ad 'ad 'is real one shet in a door or a drawer, the same as Mrs. Wellin, as I were a-drinkin' tea along with, as wanted to show me a gownd as she wished to part with, as were a black satin. So she says, "I'll go and fetch it down, as is in my bottom drawer, or else in my cupboard." So up she went, and I waited and waited, and couldn't think wotever 'ad come to 'er, so I goes to the bottom

of the stairs, for she'd sent the gal out for some shrimps, as she said was werry fine and fresh, not as I can fancy 'ow they can be cort fresh up in Kentish Town. I 'eard 'er a-screamin' and a-'ollerin' frightful, and thought she were afire. Up I 'urries, and if she 'adn't been and shet 'erself, leastways a bit on 'er, and all 'er clothes in the cupboard door, as 'ad a spring lock, so she were reg'lar brought up short, and would not 'ave got free in a 'urry if she'd been alone in the 'ouse, as I considers ain't never safe for any one as is elderly, and 'as to backin' agin a door to shet it, I don't call that a-doin' of things properly, as it's lucky as it didn't ketch 'er flesh deeper, cos that door shet with great force, thro' 'avin' been the place where 'er 'usban, as were a workin' jeweller and silver chaser, did used to lock ap 'is wallybles, as she said often 'ad thousins in there, and not even told 'er, and were always more frightened of fire than thieves, cos, he said, if nobody didn't know as there was wallybles in that cupboard, they wouldn't go there to look for 'em; and right he was, for, depend on it, no thieves don't go nowhere on specs. They knows where to lay 'ands on things.

But, talkin' of thieves, Miss Biber she will 'ave it as it's reglar spitin' the Egypshuns for to 'ave collared that there Needle.

I says, "Why, it were give us by that Kurdive, as they called 'im."

She says, "It weren't 'is to give, as is only a wessel of the Sultan."

I says, "I don't know about 'is bein' a wessel, as is wot Mrs. Yellman calls Spurgin, but he certinly give it, and if he 'adn't no right to, why, that's 'is busyness, as may settle it with the Sultan, and get the sack for 'is pains."

So she says, "You speak very light over 'rong and robbery."

"Why," I says, "there's nothink else a-goin' on all round, and if anyone gets cort, why, he's punished, but if he gets off with the swag, why, he's looked on as a reglar Nero, as ruled over Rome like that there Wictor Manuel, tho' I'm glad as he made it up with the poor dear old Pope, as I'm sure that good soul wouldn't never 'ave liked to die bad friends with 'is bitterest henemy."

And, talkin' of that, whyever don't they put this 'ere Needle up in front of St. Paul's, the same as they've got one in front of St. Peter's, tho' in course they ain't got the same open space, nor yet the fountins; and tho' I always will say as I likes St. Paul's, it's only a pill-box compared with St. Peter's; and Queen Ann looks werry nice, like a Queen on a twelfth cake, as were a good soul, tho' fond of a drop, and never wouldn't cut nobody's

'ead off all 'er reign, a-knowin' as they couldn't raise another glass to their lips if she did, as 'ad a 'art as could feel for another; and wouldn't 'ave stood no shettin' up pubs agin the poor man's 'onest drop of beer, well a-knowin' as them as wants to indulge on the sly can do it jest as well with no pub open; and they do say as she 'ad 'er statue put up there a-lookin' at the public-'ouse to show as she give 'er countinouse to drinkin' in moderation, tho' the 'ouse were closed in course durin' church-time, tho' there's many a one 'ave been took faint arter a long sermon, as a drain of sperrits might 'ave saved the life of the same, as wot I took that time as I were pretty nigh drownded a-goin' to see that blessed Needle, as didn't take no more effec' than nothink, tho' in course there was a bed of Tems water for it to lay upon, and if it 'adn't 'appened in church-time of Sunday, I don't believe as ever I should 'ave 'eld up my 'ead agin.

For both them watermen and landlady reglar poured the sperrits down me, and in spite of it all I got a reglar chill, as seemed to strike thro' to my werry marrer of my bones, and I shivered for days arter, and dreamed as I were a-drownin' all the rest of the week; and Brown says as I reglar sobbed for brandy in my sleep.

All as I've got to say is, it's a shame to let them drunken old waggerbones ply for 'ire, as the Tems

perlice did ought to take up; and of all the artful, carneyin' old willins, it were that party as took us off in 'is boat, as I reglar looked on as a father, tho' Brown did jeer and say I did ought to 'ave been ashamed of myself to let a old man like that pull me anywheres, as must be long past 'is work, but in course I were not a-thinkin' of hage, but a-judgin' by 'is kind words as he spoke to me.

The cold as I got over that Needle seemed for to cling to me, and the things as I were told to take for it, specially at night, was wonderful, from onion porridge to treacle possit, with mulled wine and 'ot beer, let alone rum and water with a lump of butter the last thing, as is the sailor's remedy; and then I 'ad white wine way, and then gruel and brandy, good old port, and elder wine, as is in my opinion all rubbish, and a glass of water is best, for them things cloys the stomick, and throwed me into a reglar fever; not as I took 'em all at once, but only two one night; but I do think the 'ot elder, after black puddin's and old ale for supper, throwed me into that 'eat as I thought I should be suffercated under the bed-clothes, and tried for to throw 'em off.

"Wot's the matter?" says a woice as sounded like Brown.

I says, "Oh, this 'eat! I'm stifled."

"You must espect it 'ot in Egyp'," says he.

I looks up, and there was that Spinx's 'ead, as I'd seen in Egyp' right in front of me, as looked for all the world like Dizzy.

I says, "I ain't in Egyp'."

"Ain't you?" says the 'ead, with a wink, "but keep it dark, cos the 'ole Inglish harmy is 'id inside me, ready for to come out and seize Egyp' in case the Rooshins should make too free with the Turks."

I says, "And quite right, too."

So says that 'ead to me, "Would you mind a-settin' 'ere for a bit while I gets my supper, as can give the alarm if the henemy comes, as won't ever suspect you of bein' a sentry, so won't pick you off for a outpost."

I says, "Mussy on us! I should 'ope not, tho' not as I ain't much over sixty, so not a sentry, yet ready to die for my Queen and country like every wolunteer in the land; and," I says, "no wonder them Turks don't want the British fleet a-ridin' at anker just outside their werry walls, cos they knows as them ironclads is chuck full of Jack tars, and if they was to know as Queen Wictorier wanted all the Turkeys in the world, they'd take and seize 'em for 'er in no time; cos it's all werry fine parties a-sayin' as we ain't got no harmy, but they forgets the men as we've got afloat."

So there I set a watchin' that there Spinx, as seemed to me to 'ave fell asleep. As to supper, it

didn't give no signs of eatin', and didn't look a bit like Dizzy, but like a furious fieldmale a-glarin' at me with red eyes.

"What 'ave you been and done with my Needle?" she says, "as I wouldn't 'ave lost were it ever so."

"Give it up!" I says; "bless the lady." I were a-goin' to say fieldmale, but checked myself, a-rememberin' as that were not a proper name for a queen, and I see it were Clearpatrer, as I knowed at a glance, let alone 'er illudin' to the Needle.

She says, "I'll 'ave it."

I says, "By all means." I says, "Queen Wictorier is too much the lady to keep it if, after givin' it to 'er, you wants it back, as ain't no use to nobody for that matter, and you left it a-kickin' about in the sand."

She says, "Queen Wictorier indeed! Who s she, as never conkered Julia Seizer."

I says, "Certingly not; but if you wants to know who she is, jest ask all the world, tho' the fust donkey-boy as you meets will tell you—as is one of the best women as ever lived, and the werry best queen as ever could be thought on; and not one to go a-follerin' of sojers about, like a gipsy, and when she goes on board 'er royal yott, goes about decent, and don't 'ave no slaves about 'er,

tho' that powerful as all the world is at 'er feet, and even the sun don't dare to set in 'er dominions."

I thought as I see that Spinx toss 'er 'ead, and then I see someone a-movin' jest round the corner, so I 'ollars,

"Who's there?"

"The Hemperor of Roosher," says a woice, "as 'ave to come to put you into bed, as'll ketch your death, a-settin' 'ere."

I says, "Never will I give up my post, as I'm a-keepin' for Queen Wictorier, bless her."

"Nonsense, Martha," says the Hemperor, "turn into bed, do."

I looks up, and if there wasn't Brown, as 'ad come up to bed and found me a-settin' on the bedside, a-'oldin' on to the bed-post, as I said I'd never give up; nor more I wouldn't if it 'ad been a post as Queen Wictorier 'ad give me, as I should consider a post of 'oner.

I was glad to get to bed, thro' bein' chilled, and I says to Brown, before goin' to sleep, "You see if my dream don't turn out somethink afore long."

He says, "I fully espects as it will."

I says, "Wot will it be?"

"Why," he says, "roomatics;" and goes off to sleep in a instant, as is Brown all over, as, tho' a

good 'usbin, 'ave got a way of cuttin' of you short, partikler over pollytics, as he says ain't no woman's provinces, tho' I don't see myself what the provinces 'as got to do with it.

I can't 'elp a-thinkin' as preaps our fetchin' that Needle 'ome give umbrage to them Rooshuns, as may think as we are a-treatin' Egyp as it were all ours, and 'ad a right to everythink in it, tho' I'm sure if it were ours we should soon do away with lots of things, all their 'arem-scarem ways, and their dirt and filth; and as to 'abits, they're downright disgraceful, as will wash theirselves in public, and go on that disgustin', as the perlice would 'ave to run 'em in by the score all day long, as would be three months at the werry least; and tho' we don't do much to a man as kicks 'is wife to death, we couldn't stand anyone, not even the Lord Mare, a-tyin' of 'is old wives up in a sack when he's tired on 'em, and a-drownin' 'em over London Bridge by the dozen.

No doubt, if there's a-goin' to be any words over this 'ere Needle, we shall give it up; but I do 'ope as them as wants it will 'ave to come and fetch it away, as in course is a great curiosity. But I only wish as it could speak, and then it would tell us wonderful things; not as I should credit all as it said, cos it's werry easy for any one as 'ave been in them outlandish parts, to come

and bounce and blow, and we can only 'ope as some who comes a-boastin' of 'avin' shot down a lot of poor creetures as 'adn't done 'em no 'arm, and their only fault bein' black, is a-tellin' lies. And, I says, it ain't 'ardly possible for to believe as a man as is a man, tho' he may not be any great shakes, would come and glory in sheddin' innercent blood, thro' a-pretendin' to preach the Gospel to the 'eathen. I only knows if he was to dare to come 'ere, and Queen Wictorier should 'ear on it, if she didn't order 'im to be 'ung, would give 'im the cold shoulder, as every one decent would foller 'er esample, and the fellow might go and spread 'isself among his own pals, for no parties as calls theirselves Christshuns or gentlemen would notice such a fellow, with 'is cantin' 'umbug about the Gospel of Peace, as is enuf to make a cat larf, as the sayin' is, and all good Christshuns ashamed of the name; but wot is wuss than all, it encourages them parties as larfs at religion as I do not wonder at some a-doin' when I 'ears the rubbish as is talked by them serous parties as gives away tracks by the Marble Arch of a Sunday, as no doubt many on 'em means well, but is that ignerant theirselves, and ain't 'ad time for to consider nothink werry deep, like young Silwood, as weren't sixteen when he bust out preachin' in the streets, as give tung once over Mrs. Padwick's

tea-table, a-sayin' as he'd a glorious message for us all.

I says, "Oh! bother your message; let's 'ave our meals in peace, that's a good boy."

He says as he must preach the Word in season and out of season.

So Mrs. Padwick up and says then, "I tell you wot it is, if you gives me any more of your seasonin' 'ere, I'll turn you out afore the tea's drored;" for, as she said, she wasn't goin' to stand it from such a green goose as that.

And a nice end he come to, as went to the bad altogether within a year, and told me to my face as there wasn't no God, and he could prove it.

"Well," I says, "you always was a fool, my good boy, so you did ought to know; but," I says, "I don't want none of your provin', and if you don't move off I'll take and trundle the mop all over you;" for he was a-standin' in front of our door afore breakfast, and the gal 'ad jest come out to do the steps, and I were a-lookin' out for a water-crease, jest as he come up as were afore eight in the mornin', as 'adn't been 'ome all night, and only just seventeen then, as brought 'is mother to 'er grave, not as she were much loss, for she were all gin and drivel 'erself, as did used to take that boy to ear them rantin' Metherdists, as I can't abear, as 'ave seen 'er myself the wuss for licker

arter a serous tea, with two ministers at table as 'ad been misshunaries, and no wonder they'd come 'ome safe, for no savidge, 'owever hungry, could 'ave touched a bit of 'em, tho' they both told me as I were in the bond of bitterness, cos I wouldn't jine their Moody and Sankey class, as I considers a-turnin' of serous things into larks, as I don't 'old with in religion; and so it were as that young Silwood went from bad to wuss, and ended in a conwix settlement; and then 'is father, he'd been brought up to the tailorin' busyness, and turned a teatotaler, but 'ad broke loose arter 'is wife's death, and in course went down the 'ill, as the sayin' is, a reglar docker, and when I last 'eard, were the pauper lunytic side of the Stepney Union, as wasn't ignorance for they 'ad both 'ad fust-rate edications, and might 'ave rode in 'is carridge if he'd 'ave stuck to the board, and kep his mouth away from the bottle.

But as to where to put that Needle, I can't say, not as I believes in no judgments a-follerin' of it, so long as it ain't put too near the footpath, as might topple over on to them as was passin' by, as would come 'ome to them with a wengeance, and if left too near the river, might rust and break off short, as it's a pity it weren't left like a oyster in its native sanded bed, where it wasn't in nobody's ways, and parties could go and set on it and

fancy all manner about it, as will be werry out of place in a November fog, and be werry soon begrimed with London sut, as it will pretty soon tarnish it, tho' it may be a deal more anshent than the British Iles theirselves.

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